

The Story Of  
*OREGON*  
And Its People



CHAPMAN

O. P. BARNES  
CHICAGO

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Children of the west are required to spend too much time on the settlement of New England and too little on their own section. A study of the various charters granted to the early colonists by the sovereigns of England is interesting to the scholar, but to the American boy or girl the meeting of the free and honest pioneers of Oregon in the open air at Champoege means vastly more.

The Indian wars that were fought in our valleys and mountains have a greater significance than the troubles with the Pequots, and the devotion of Jason Lee and the martyrdom of Whitman are unsurpassed in the annals of any country or time.

"The Story of Oregon and Its People" gives for the first time the History of Oregon in a form suitable as a text-book for school use, and the favor with which it has already been received proves that the teachers of the state are alive to the necessity of such instruction.

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# THE STORY OF OREGON AND ITS PEOPLE

BY CHARLES H. CHAPMAN, PH. D.

CHICAGO

O. P. BARNES, PUBLISHER

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## PREFACE

To the student of human affairs the history of the settlement of Oregon will ever be a tale of absorbing interest. Coming as the last of those westward movements by which the American commonwealths were peopled, Oregon more closely typifies the home-seeking and the home-making spirit of the Saxon race than any of her sister states.

The early pioneers of Oregon were not driven to make the hazardous journey by the lash of religious persecution, nor were they impelled to brave the hardships of the plains and mountains by the desire for gold. Sustained only by the ambition to found a home for themselves and their children in the distant West, or led by the unselfish zeal of the missionary, they went about their task soberly and seriously, and with a resolute purpose that never faltered in the presence of danger.

Certainly the children of no land under the sun have a nobler heritage of brave and honest ancestry than those of Oregon, and if *THE STORY OF OREGON AND ITS PEOPLE* shall bring this fact and its message closer to the hearts of the young it will have served the purpose for which it was written.

June, 1909.

O. P. BARNES.

## COVER DESIGN

The design on the cover is reproduced from a photograph of Hermon Atkins MacNeil's statue, "The Coming of the White Man," which stands in the City Park at Portland, Oregon, facing the gorge through which the white man first floated down the Columbia.

"The group is that of two Indians, Chief Multnomah and a young brave. The figures have a peculiar beauty and dignity of their own. Into the figure of Multnomah the artist has put the pride of all the Indian tribes, as he has endowed the young brave with a youthful curiosity,—the strong characteristics of the two, individual, yet harmonious in their relations to each other." —*Harriet Warner Chapin, in The Pacific Monthly.*

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## CHAPTER I

### DISCOVERY OF THE COLUMBIA

1. **The River of the West.**—During the first half of the eighteenth century that part of the United States which lies west of the Mississippi River and north of the forty-second parallel of latitude was claimed by France as part of Louisiana. The province of Louisiana also included much territory south of the forty-second parallel, but the history of Oregon is not concerned with it.<sup>1</sup> Before the close of her colonial wars with England in 1763, France ceded Louisiana to Spain, but for many years prior to that event the country between the Great Lakes and the Rocky Mountains was diligently explored by French travelers and Jesuit missionaries. In their books of travel which are very numerous, these men repeated accounts given them by the Indians of a great river beyond the Shining Mountains.<sup>2</sup> It was naturally said to flow into the Pacific Ocean and was known by various names such as River of the West, River Thegayò, Rio de Aguilar. One of the French explorers, Lepage Dupratz, fell in

<sup>1</sup>The forty-second parallel of latitude forms the boundary between Oregon and California.

<sup>2</sup>The Frenchmen called the Rocky Mountains "Shining Mountains" because of the glittering rock pinnacles which are visible at a great distance, or perhaps because of the white snow peaks. Later they were called Stony, and finally Rocky Mountains.

with a Yazoo Indian, who had crossed the Shining Mountains and traveled down the River of the West until he was turned back by a war between the tribes dwelling on its banks, but in those days no white man had yet seen it. Thus we owe to the French the faint beginnings of our knowledge of the great river which separates the states of Oregon and Washington and drains the Inland Empire.

**2. The Oregon.**—The first English-speaking traveler who had anything to say about the River of the West was Jonathan Carver, a native of Connecticut, who set out from Boston in the year 1766, and spent two years in the country around the head of Lake Superior and westward. He may have penetrated to the sources of the Missouri, but probably not. Very likely the Red River of the North was the western limit of his adventures.<sup>3</sup> In his book of travels which was published in London in 1778, Carver speaks of the River of the West calling it the "Oregon." He says the Indians told him that it rose near the sources of the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi and the Red River of the North. The question of how Carver obtained the name Oregon has puzzled later writers. The plain implication from his narrative is that he heard it from the Indians, but this is not to be believed because it does not occur in any Indian language. Neither the natives with whom Carver conversed nor those who dwelt on the banks of the Columbia had any word

<sup>3</sup>What Carver has to say about the country west of the headwaters of the Mississippi is largely translated from the writings of French travelers and missionaries. There is but little reason to believe that he actually saw what he tried to describe.

which resembled Oregon.<sup>4</sup> We may therefore suppose, if we like, that Carver misunderstood some name which the Indians gave him, or, to judge more harshly, he may have fabricated it. At any rate, the name "Oregon" can be traced to Carver's book of travels and to no other source. Just how it originated may always remain among those puzzles which provide historians with fertile matter for conjecture and controversy. It never came into common use for the River of the West, but was afterward applied to the whole tract of country north of California and west of the Rocky Mountains.

**3. The Name Oregon.**—The melodious name Oregon seems to have pleased the fancy of the world from the time when Carver first published it, though it was not by any means universally known and used for many years. Captain Gray, who discovered the Columbia, knew nothing of it or he would not have felt at liberty to bestow the name of his ship upon the great river; nor does it appear in the journal of Lewis and Clark which was written between the years 1804 and 1806. Still as time passed, the name Oregon was coming into vogue among those persons who had occasion to speak of the Pacific Coast region. Jefferson employed it in his instructions to Lewis and Clark for instance, which indicates that it was in good literary repute when he wrote. Undoubtedly, however, it was the poet Bryant who made the name Oregon popular by using its sonor-

<sup>4</sup>Mofras, an acute and observant Frenchman who visited Oregon in 1841-2, says that the word "Oregon" is not found in the language of any Indian tribe that dwells on the banks of the Columbia.

ous syllables to enhance the solemn music of Thanatopsis.

4. **Search for the Columbia.**—The vague accounts of the River of the West, which Carver and the French explorers had given, were confirmed by the natural supposition that the waters from the Pacific slope of the Rocky Mountains must find their way to the ocean somewhere. With this thought more or less clearly in mind, and haunted, too, by the old belief that there was a passage across the continent from the Atlantic, navigators who sailed along the western coast of North America before 1792 were on the watch either for the mouth of a great river or for a navigable channel toward the inland regions. They sought, also, northward of San Francisco for a good harbor, but for the most part they sought vainly since the coast in this region is singularly devoid of inlets which ships can enter easily. The Pacific Coast was frequented by vessels, and it stands to reason that many captains must have noticed the outflow of water from the mouth of the Columbia and wondered what lay beyond it toward the interior; but the entrance was guarded by an array of dangerous breakers miles in width, and before Captain Gray, none seem to have crossed the bar. The ships which began the passage failed to finish it.<sup>5</sup> As early as 1775 the Spanish navigator Heceta, on a voyage of discovery along the coast, saw the mouth of the Columbia and attempted to enter it, but the breakers and the strong

<sup>5</sup>The navigation at the mouth of the Columbia was beset with terrors for the early ship captains. Mofras says it was as dangerous a passage as he had ever seen. The government engineers have made the channel perfectly safe for modern vessels.

seaward current foiled him. The famous Captain Cook coasting northward passed by the river but he did not find it. In 1778 Captain John Meares, who was an Englishman sailing under the Portuguese flag, explored the coast with a rather definite purpose to discover the River of the West. He had seen it marked on Spanish charts under the name of St. Roque, which, of course, the mapmakers had drawn from Heceta's observations. Meares found the mouth of the Columbia in the latitude which the charts indicated, but he mistook it for a mere indentation in the coast, and made up his mind that the Spanish mapmakers had blundered and misled him. In an unforgiving spirit he changed the name of the northern cape at the mouth from St. Roque to "Disappointment" and called the inlet Deception Bay. Posterity has dealt out poetic justice to these names. The cape is still called Disappointment, which is fair enough since Meares was actually disappointed, but inasmuch as the inlet was not a bay and did not deceive him, though he deceived himself, the title he gave to it has been dropped.

5. **Gray's First Voyage.**—Captain Robert Gray, the American navigator who really discovered the Columbia River, made two voyages to the Pacific coast. In both of them he sailed from Boston in the employ of a firm of fur traders. Upon the first, which ended August 10, 1790, he traded with the Indians along the coast of Oregon and Washington and in a small boat explored an inlet which may have been the mouth of the Columbia.<sup>6</sup> When his cargo of furs was complete,

<sup>6</sup>Bancroft says it was Tillamook Bay, and he may be right.

Gray sailed homeward by way of China and circum-navigated the globe. By his ship's log he had traveled 50,000 miles when he re-entered Boston harbor. Though the firm which employed him did not make a great deal of money by his first voyage, they were proud of his feat. It was something of an achievement to sail around the world in those days, and not many American sailors had done it. The fur traders were also encouraged by Gray's accounts to believe that they could build up a profitable business with the maritime Indian tribes. Accordingly they speedily sent Gray forth on a second voyage in the same ship, "Columbia" by name, in which he had sailed before. It was in the spring of 1791 that he reached the Oregon coast again. Sailing northward toward Vancouver Island he saw the mouth of the Columbia and for nine days tried to enter it.<sup>7</sup> The outward rush of the waters and the breakers finally baffled him as they had earlier sailors, and he gave up the attempt until the next spring. He passed the winter of 1791-2 at Clayoquot Harbor, Vancouver Island. During the rainy months he kept his sailors employed by building a small sloop which he named the "Adventure." This was the second sea-

<sup>7</sup>This is a necessary inference from what Vancouver says in his account of his meeting with Gray: "Mr. Gray stated that he had been some several days attempting to enter it, which at length he had been unable to effect in consequence of a very strong outset." How very British Vancouver must have been not to suspect that this strong outset implied a great river. He seems to have mistaken Sand Island for the main southern shore and to have overlooked the true mouth altogether.



going vessel built on the Pacific coast north of San Francisco.<sup>8</sup>

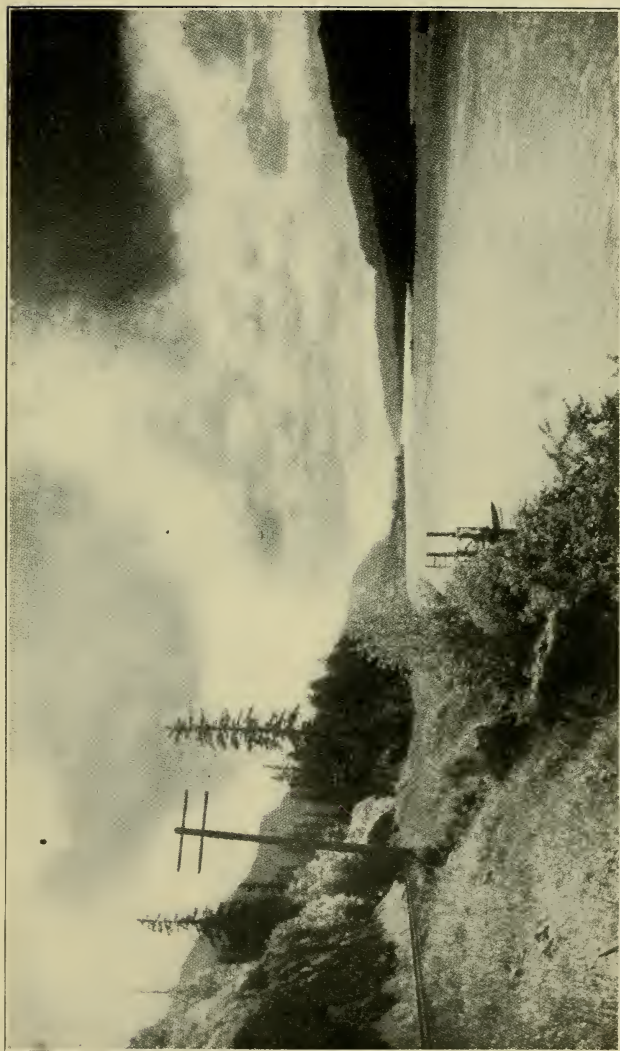
6. **Discovery of the Mouth of the Columbia.**—Early in April, 1792, Gray sailed to the southward from his winter harbor in the ship "Columbia." He was evidently determined to find out what the strong seaward current at Deception Bay signified. In the first days of May he was off the mouth of the Columbia, and on the 11th he crossed the bar and entered the river. Being the first white man to behold its wide waters and to sail upon them, Gray had the right to name the stream. He called it the Columbia for his ship. The world has accepted this name for the river of the West in preference to Oregon or to any of the others by which it was formerly known, but Gray's name of "Cape Hancock" for Cape Disappointment has fallen into disuse. Gray sailed twenty-five miles up the Columbia. Then it puzzled him to find the channel among the shoals and he turned his prow to the west. On the 20th of May he crossed the bar outward and sailed away to the north on his business of buying furs. His trade with the Indians prospered and when his ship was laden he voyaged homeward, once more circumnavigating the earth. To sailors like Captain Gray, who have shrewdness in practical affairs united with keen scientific curiosity, the world owes many important geographical discoveries.

7. **Vancouver's Arrival.**—In the summer of 1792, while Gray was trading and exploring along the coast

<sup>8</sup>Captain Meares built the first. It was called the "Northwest America."

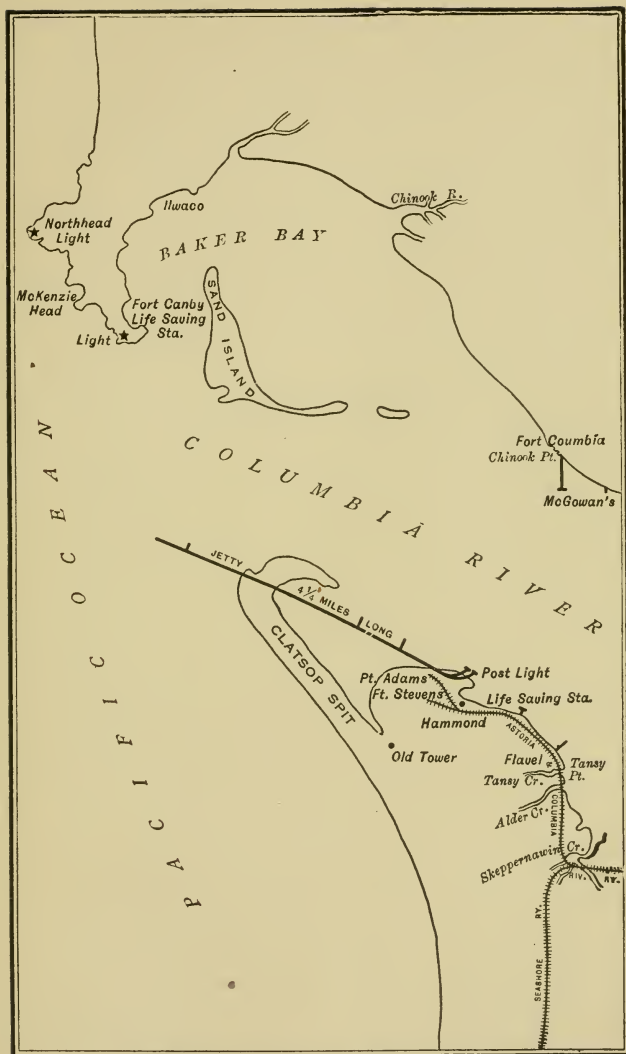
of Oregon and Washington, Captain Vancouver of the British navy was also there with two vessels on business for his government.<sup>9</sup> Vancouver sailed on the larger vessel, the "Discovery," while his consort, the "Chatham," was commanded by Lieutenant W. R. Broughton. They reached Cape Mendocino in April, 1792, and thence proceeded northward exploring minutely as they coasted along. Vancouver expressed his surprise that there should be no good harbors on such a long stretch of coast line. The reader is more surprised that when he finally found one of the best in the world he had not the judgment to recognize it. He passed the mouth of the Columbia on the 27th of April but mistook it for a petty inlet unworthy of notice. Still going to the north, leaving behind the great discovery he might have made, and with the glory of it forever lost to him and his country, he fell in with Gray near the Straits of Fuca. Gray was then on the point of sailing southward to make his second and successful effort to enter the Columbia. He told Vancouver of his trying to make the passage for several days the year before and finally giving it up, but, with true

<sup>9</sup>Vancouver's business was to explore the coast and possibly to execute certain provisions of the Nootka Convention. This treaty between England and Spain was made on October 28, 1790. It pacified quarrels which had grown out of their conflicting claims to the Northwest Coast. Each nation pretended to derive title from the discoveries of the early navigators. Cook, for example on the English side, and Heceta on the Spanish. In 1789 both Spanish and British parties tried to settle at Nootka Sound, which brought matters to a crisis and led to the conclusion of the Nootka Convention. The general purport of this treaty was an agreement for joint occupation. Spain's rights came down to the United States through the Louisiana



A SCENE ON THE COLUMBIA





MOUTH OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER



British perversity, His Majesty's Captain insisted that the inlet was of no consequence in spite of the strong outward flow of water. He admitted that the phenomenon was difficult to account for, yet he obstinately refused to account for it on the only rational hypothesis of a great river there discharging into the sea. Fortunately for America, Gray was less inclined to let his theories outweigh facts.

**8. Broughton Enters the Columbia.**—Vancouver lingered on the coast north of the Columbia during the summer, gradually working his way into higher latitudes. On August 28th he anchored in Nootka Sound. In the meantime after entering the Columbia, Gray had touched at Nootka and left there a chart of the river's mouth. This Vancouver obtained and took with him when he sailed southward in October. On the 19th of that month he was again off the mouth of the Columbia, but fearing to attempt the entrance with his own vessel, he sent in Lieutenant Broughton with the "Chatham" to explore the river.<sup>10</sup> Broughton sailed up the channel as far as he thought his ship Purchase, perhaps, and the Joint Occupation Treaty of 1818 between us and England may have been nothing more than a continuation of the Nootka arrangement. On January 1, 1794, Spain and England concluded another treaty which confirmed the Nootka arrangement for joint occupation. About a year later the Spaniards removed all their portable goods from Nootka, but they gave up none of their formal claims to the country. From that time to this no other white settlement has been established at the spot. It lay just north of the forty-ninth parallel and its good harbor made it in a modest way an international resort for the fur traders. Consult Schafer's History of the Pacific Northwest.

<sup>10</sup>When Broughton entered the Columbia he found the British brig "Jenny" there before him. Broughton named Baker's Bay after the



could go safely then took to his launch and made his way to a point on the Washington side about 100 miles from the mouth. To this place he affixed his commander's name, Vancouver, which it still bears.

9. **Names of Points on the Columbia.**—Many of the prominent places up and down the Columbia owe their names to Lieutenant Broughton. Mount Hood he named for an English Lord,<sup>11</sup> Walker's Island for one of his men, Tongue Point was so called because of its shape, and Gray's Bay in honor of the discoverer of the Columbia.<sup>12</sup> Thus the first systematic exploration of the Northwest Coast was made by Vancouver, a British naval officer, under the direction of his government, while Gray's discovery of the Columbia was the fruit of individual enterprise. His ship was one among many vessels which traded with the Indians along the coast for furs, and it is likely that the captains of these vessels made many discoveries which have never been recorded.<sup>13</sup>

captain of the "Jenny." One easily conjectures that many little barks may have slipped into and out of the Columbia before 1792 without leaving any record. The tale of Dupratz's Yazoo Indian that the natives at the mouth of the river had seen ships and white men even in his day is not necessarily baseless.

<sup>11</sup>Samuel Viscount Hood an English Admiral, born 1724, died 1816.

<sup>12</sup>Most of the historic points on the coast north of California and south of Alaska owe their names to Vancouver. His account of his explorations was published in sumptuous style in 1798. It was widely read and the names which it affixed to the places mentioned were accepted by the world once for all.

<sup>13</sup>Some historians say that captains who happened upon good harbors would conceal their discoveries from rival traders. This was very natural. They were seeking profit, and cared nothing for geography.

## CHAPTER II

### THE NORTHWEST COMPANY

10. *The Northwest Company.*—In 1792 and for some years later there was free competition among all comers in the fur trade with the Indians on the Northwest Coast. But even at that time the great Northwest Company of Montreal had begun to stretch its long arms toward the Pacific. It had already monopolized the fur business of the interior country from the Hudson Bay slope to the Rocky Mountains. This powerful and indefatigable company was organized in Montreal in the winter of 1783-4 by a number of Scotchmen who had taken up the fur trade in Canada after the country was ceded to Great Britain by the French.<sup>14</sup> The old Hudson Bay Company, which was chartered by King Charles II in 1760, claimed indefinite rights over the whole of the British possessions north of the United States and at first asserted a monopoly of the fur trade throughout the entire region, vast as it was. The Northwest Company successfully resisted this effort of their older rival. With wonderful energy they pushed westward, building forts and laying the foundations of permanent trade with the Indians as they advanced. By the

<sup>14</sup>Canada passed over to the English in 1764. The cession from the French included the Mississippi Valley. Louisiana had been transferred secretly to Spain the year before.

year 1792 the scattered posts of the Northwest Company occupied the Canadian territory to the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains.

**11. Alexander Mackenzie.**—The most enterprising of their factors was Alexander Mackenzie. This ardent and tireless explorer was born in Scotland and emigrated to Canada in his boyhood. Thoroughly trained in the secrets of the fur trade, he was also an enlightened traveler whose geographical discoveries made him famous. In the year 1785 he joined the "X Y Company" of Montreal, which was formed to compete with the Northwest Company, but in 1787 the rivals united into one corporation under the name of the latter, and Mackenzie then became one of its partners and agents. His station in the year 1789 was at Fort Chippewayan on the remote and dismal shore of Athabasca Lake. Setting out from this post in the spring of 1789, Mackenzie journeyed down the river which bears his name to the Arctic Ocean, making a safe return in the fall of the same year. In the fall of 1792 he set out from Fort Chippewayan on a second exploring trip, this time going to the west. He followed up the Peace River to its sources in the Rocky Mountains and there, overtaken by the snows of winter, he lay with his men till May. By June Mackenzie reached the summit of the Rocky Mountains, and first of all white men from the beginning of the world, saw the waters parting at his feet some to reach the Atlantic Ocean and some to wander through verdant vales and yawning chasms to the Pacific. He reached the river now called Fraser and voyaged

down its course in canoes for two hundred and fifty miles; then he struck to the west again and finally, not far from the parallel of fifty-two degrees north latitude, stood upon the shore of the Pacific Ocean. Mackenzie was the first white man to cross the continent north of the Mexican line. Before he set out upon his return he painted this inscription in vermilion letters upon a promontory looking toward the sea: "Alexander Mackenzie, from Canada by land, the twenty-second of July, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three." His journey opened a pathway to the Pacific for the Northwest Company of fur traders and their adventurous pioneers soon followed in his steps. Thus the race began between Great Britain and the United States for the possession of the Oregon country<sup>15</sup> with the British in the lead.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup>The Oregon country included all the territory from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific north of California and south of Alaska.

<sup>16</sup>Long before 1803 the agents of the Northwest Company were building forts on the streams which finally reach the Columbia. The progress westward was continuous. When Astor began his enterprise at the mouth of the Columbia in 1810 they were prepared to combat and ultimately rout him.

## CHAPTER III

### THE LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

**12. Origin of the Lewis and Clark Expedition.**—The exploring expeditions of Sir Alexander Mackenzie developed naturally from the tendency of the Northwest Company to expand its trade. The famous Lewis and Clark expedition across the continent to the Pacific, which occurred some ten years later, developed just as naturally from the tendency of the United States to expand its territory and population. The former was conceived and executed by a single great adventurer. The latter was conceived by the most intelligent American of his generation and executed by two subordinates of consummate ability. Thomas Jefferson planned the expedition which Lewis and Clark conducted. Its course began at St. Louis and ended at the mouth of the Columbia. Like Xenophon's *Anabasis*, Marco Polo's journey to Cathay, and the first voyage of Columbus across the Atlantic, the exploring expedition of Lewis and Clark had excited the imagination of the world, and as time passes historians become more and more deeply impressed with its importance. It was authorized by Congress in response to a special message from President Jefferson which he transmitted on January 18, 1803.

**13. Jefferson's Interest in the West.**—Jefferson's alert and comprehensive intellect had long been in-

terested in the country beyond the Mississippi. He loved to hear of its mountains, its Indian tribes, its desert wastes and the strange beasts which roamed them.<sup>17</sup> Now and then he had received for his scientific collection specimen bones of extinct monsters which formerly dwelt in those remote and almost unknown regions and he eagerly sought for more.<sup>18</sup> From the close of the Revolution, too, his imagination had been kindled with lofty dreams of an imperial Nation which should stretch from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. In those early times the adventurous John Ledyard wrote,<sup>19</sup> "The American Revolution invites to a thorough discovery of the continent," evidently thinking of a future when the United States would cover the continent. Jefferson knew Ledyard and encouraged him in his schemes of exploration. As early as December, 1783, Jefferson in writing to George Rogers Clark to propose tentatively a trip beyond the Mississippi hinted that the English would

<sup>17</sup>The most interesting was the buffalo, then common on the plains but now almost extinct. The story of the buffalo illustrates the folly of permitting greed to operate without restraint.

<sup>18</sup>Scientists were then making those investigations into fossil remains which later enabled Darwin and others to write the history of life from its humble beginnings to the advent of man. Jefferson took all knowledge for his field.

<sup>19</sup>Schafer gives an interesting account of Ledyard. He was a Connecticut Yankee with a strong taste for rash adventures and a brain which projected new schemes as fast as his old ones failed. He sailed with Captain Cook, published a book in 1783 which interested American merchants in the Pacific fur trade, fell a victim to the senseless tyranny of Russia, and finally died on his way to seek for the sources of the Nile.



probably try to plant colonies there.<sup>20</sup> No doubt jealousy of England played a part in keeping Jefferson's interest in the western country active from the close of the Revolution to the time when he actually despatched Lewis and Clark upon their journey. No man knew better than he what was going on in the world. He was informed of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's trip to the Pacific and he knew enough of the energy of the Northwest Company to foresee what its consequences would be. Already in 1803 the British traders had invaded the country about the tributaries of the Missouri. Their occupation of the whole region west of the Mississippi was only a question of time unless American enterprise should meet and turn them back.

**14. Jefferson and France.**—But Jefferson's immediate anxieties concerning the Valley of the Mississippi and the entire western country related to France. By the treaty which closed the Revolutionary War, England had given up her claims to the territory east of the Mississippi and south of Canada. In 1803 this was in the possession of the United States and it was rapidly filling with settlers from the older states. Kentucky then had a white American population of some 180,000; Ohio had 45,000. Altogether

<sup>20</sup>This tentative project never came to anything. In 1792 Jefferson induced the American Philosophical Society to raise a subscription for western exploration. Meriwether Lewis was put at the head of the expedition, but it got no further than Kentucky. This was not Lewis's fault. The botanist Michaux who was to take an important part was a Frenchman and his government recalled him just in time to spoil the trip.



there were many more than 325,000 white Americans in the Mississippi Valley when Lewis and Clark set out on their journey.<sup>21</sup> At the beginning of 1803 the country between the Rocky Mountains and the Mississippi, which was called Louisiana, belonged to France. In 1763 the French had ceded it to Spain, but in 1800 the powerful Napoleon, who then dominated European affairs, compelled the feeble Spaniards to return it. He had a wonderful project of building up a great colonial empire and making France, by means of it, the leading naval power of the world. The colonial empire would create maritime trade; this would train sailors and multiply ships. His ideas were by no means fanciful, but he had too many other things on his hands to carry them out.

**15. Mouths of the Mississippi.**—With Louisiana went the possession of the mouths of the Mississippi. To the settlers in the West this meant a great deal since the products of their farms and forests could reach the markets of the world only by way of New Orleans.<sup>22</sup> They understood that the French could shut them out from the city entirely if they chose, or could capture the profits of their labor by extortionate charges for storage, transfers and commissions. Whoever held New Orleans was commercial despot of the

<sup>21</sup>Schafer puts the population at 325,000 in 1800. It could not have been much short of half a million in 1803.

<sup>22</sup>At that time there were no railroads, of course. From the Mississippi Valley to the East there were not even wagon roads, and if there had been ever so good ones it would still have been cheaper to transport products by water to New Orleans. Cattle could be driven to market across the mountains, but no heavy freight could be carried so far.

Mississippi Valley. Even while Spain owned it the people were restless. From France, a much stronger and more aggressive nation which had long been planning to regain control of the Mississippi Valley,<sup>23</sup> they expected active ill-treatment. From this state of things two consequences were almost certain to follow. Either the West would separate from the Union and fight the French independently for the control of the Mississippi, or it would embroil the whole country in a war for the same purpose.<sup>24</sup>

**16. Jefferson's Designs.**—To avert the danger of war and preserve the Union, Jefferson designed two measures of far reaching statesmanship. The first was a proposal to purchase from Napoleon the city of New Orleans and the adjacent land on the east bank of the Mississippi known as West Florida. This would insure commercial freedom to the West and soothe the irritation of the settlers. Jefferson's second design was to despatch an overland exploring expedition up the Missouri River to the Pacific. By this he hoped to accomplish several desirable objects, to build up friendly trade with the Indians along the Missouri and westward to the mountains, to attract

<sup>23</sup>The offensive Genet was commissioned in 1793 to intrigue for the cession of the Mississippi Valley to France among other things.

<sup>24</sup>In the early years of the nineteenth century the Mississippi Valley settlers were not very strongly attached to the Union. Washington wrote to Governor Harrison of Virginia that "A touch of a feather would turn them any way," toward Spain, independence or a foreign protectorate. Undoubtedly the purchase of Louisiana did more than any other event to unite the country. With the election of Andrew Jackson to the Presidency the last possibility of secession in the West disappeared.

the fur trade of the Northwest Coast eastward by the overland route, to hasten the settlement of the Mississippi Valley by American pioneers, thus forestalling the intrigues of the English and the French, to balk the advance of the Northwest Fur Company in the region of the upper Missouri and Columbia Rivers, to establish intimate commercial relations between the East and the developing West and, last, but by no means least, among the motives which governed Jefferson's vast intelligence, to satisfy his keen scientific curiosity and promote the science of geography.

**17. Purchase of Louisiana.**—At the beginning of the year 1803 Jefferson began the execution of both these designs. He despatched Monroe to France to negotiate with Napoleon for the purchase of New Orleans and West Florida,<sup>25</sup> and he sent to Congress the famous message which outlined the plan of the expedition to the Pacific. Congress received the message on January 18, 1803, and promptly voted the necessary funds. The negotiations with Napoleon prospered beyond all expectation. Busied with new combinations in European affairs the great iconoclast offered to sell the whole of Louisiana to the United States hoping thus to upbuild a formidable military and commercial rival to England, his implacable foe. Jefferson leaped at the amazing opportunity and with one stroke of his pen made America an imperial nation

<sup>25</sup>West Florida was a narrow tract along the gulf east of the Mississippi. The United States claimed it under the Louisiana Purchase, and Spain as a part of Florida up to 1819. The United States then obtained undisputed title to it.

and insured to democratic institutions the scepter of the world.

**18. Meriwether Lewis.**—For the leader of the exploring expedition Jefferson selected his friend Meriwether Lewis, a young Virginian whom he had known for years and who was his private secretary at the beginning of 1803. Lewis was attractive in mind and person, well educated and a lover of woodcraft. Better still, he was a born leader of men who knew well how to choose and to command his followers. Through all the adventures and perils of the expedition not a jar occurred between the leaders, there was no suggestion of complaint or mutiny and but one man perished. Of this good fortune by far the greater part must be attributed to the consummate gift of Lewis for leadership and command. Historians have lingered pensively over the romantic qualities and the mysterious fate of this adventurous hero. When he had returned from the Pacific covered with renown and apparently ready for a long career of supreme usefulness to his country, death suddenly struck him down. This was in 1809 when Lewis was thirty-five years old. Some say that he was murdered, others that he perished by his own hand in a moment of melancholy. Just how he died no man knows.

**19. William Clark.**—With Jefferson's consent Lewis selected for his associate in the command of the expedition William Clark, a younger brother of the Indian fighter George Rogers Clark, to whom Jefferson had vaguely suggested an exploring trip to the

Pacific in 1783. He was a man of good ability and solid character. Upon the return of the expedition Jefferson appointed him superintendent of Indian affairs for Louisiana. He died in 1838 at the age of sixty-eight.

**20. Personnel of the Expedition.**—Both Lewis and Clark had served in the army and for their followers they chose in the main men of the military type who were inured to hardship and obedience. Eighteen soldiers were enlisted from the western posts. Nine hunters from Kentucky, brave young men loyal and true, also joined. Clark took along his negro servant, and these men with one exception went through to the Pacific and returned. The exception was Sergeant Charles Floyd who died on the way up the Missouri, where Sioux City now stands. His companions buried him near the river. The party also included two French interpreters who were familiar with Indian languages and customs. Up the Missouri as far as the Mandan Villages, sixteen other soldiers and watermen accompanied the expedition, but at that point they were sent back.

**21. Beginning of the Expedition.**—Toward winter in 1803 the party was assembled at St. Louis and went into camp on the Illinois shore at the mouth of the River DuBois.<sup>26</sup> Until spring Captain Clark passed the time building boats and arranging the minute

<sup>26</sup>Jefferson's negotiations with Napoleon had already resulted in the sale of Louisiana to the United States, but the formal transfer was delayed until March 9, 1804. Hence St. Louis was virtually a foreign city in the fall of 1803 and hardly suitable for the winter quarters of a party under American command.

details of the trip, while Lewis diligently gathered whatever information he could obtain from traders and trappers about the route up the Missouri. They knew the river pretty well as far as the villages of the Mandan Indians, but not beyond. On the 14th of May, 1804, the expedition finally embarked and began its voyage up the Missouri traveling in three boats, a rather large one with twenty-two oars, and two small craft of which the first was rowed with seven oars and the other with six. On the eleventh day of the journey, May 25th, they passed La Charette where Daniel Boone the famous pioneer had made his home on the outskirts of civilization.<sup>27</sup> By June 5th they had reached the mouth of the Kansas River, and just a month after starting they passed the Platte. At both these rivers they met parties of fur traders coming down from the interior, some of them bringing great quantities of beaver. Thus the invasion of the plains and the Rocky Mountains by the white trappers had already begun, but fifty years were to elapse before their victory over the desert and the Indians would be complete.<sup>28</sup> Carrying out Jefferson's instructions to cul-

<sup>27</sup>La Charette was a settlement near the mouth of Femme Osage Creek, about 45 miles by water above St. Louis. Daniel Boone settled there in the spring of 1799 with his family. The Spaniards gave him some nine hundred acres of land, but he failed to register his title properly and it was lost to him later for some years. In 1810 Congress finally restored his estate. When Boone was on his way to Missouri his old acquaintances asked why he was going so far away. "I want more elbow room," was his reply. He found it at La Charette, though the tide of emigration finally overflowed him. His old age was serene. He died in 1820.

<sup>28</sup>The adventures of these hardy scouts and trappers were related in





Wm. Black



Merimeth Lewis





tivate friendship with the Indians, the explorers held councils with the chiefs of the neighborhood on the east bank of the Missouri not far from the mouth of the Platte at the site of the future city of Council Bluffs. Thence they pursued their way northward through the Dakota country between the monotonous banks of the Missouri, the current of the turbid river ever powerful and treacherous, the scenery almost the same day after day for almost four months longer. Then at the end of October they reached the villages of the Mandan Indians and laid by for the winter.

**22. The Winter Among the Mandans.**—The Mandans were a kindly people well disposed toward the whites and familiar with traders and trappers. Lewis and Clark built a primitive log fort here and passed the time till spring as best they could. The leaders were busy providing for the party, inquiring about the country to the west and preparing their reports for the President. The men found not a little diversion in sharing the sports of the Indians. Among other incidents which broke the tedious sameness of the dreary winter months was a visit by some British fur traders from the north, agents of the great Northwest Company, which then as always was alert to learn everything touching its commercial interests. Doubtless they sent back a tale to Montreal which hastened

popular form in the "Dime Novel" literature which was widely read by young men as late as 1870, and doubtless played its part in stimulating emigration westward. The dime novel finally gave way to the "Cowboy Story" just as the trapper was replaced by the cattleman on the range.

the forward movement of the eager monopoly toward the Pacific.

**23. From the Mandans to the Shoshones.**—Leaving the hospitable Mandans on April 7, 1805, the party struck westward following the course of the upper Missouri through a country which no longer wearied them by its monotony. The route now lay through territory which had never been explored by whites. The charm of mystery and the excitement of danger attended every step of the way. All through the Dakota country they had seen vast herds of buffaloes, now they encountered the ferocious grizzly bear, the terror of the mountains. Steadily forging westward they passed the mouth of the Yellowstone and the great falls of the Missouri and on the twelfth of August, 1805, Captain Lewis stood on the height which divides the Atlantic from the Pacific slope and crossed a clear stream of icy water flowing toward the Columbia. Not long afterward they encountered the Shoshone Indians who supplied them with horses for the long and difficult overland trail to the Columbia. Boats could not be used on this section of the journey because the rivers raged through abysmal canyons along the steep oceanward slope of the mountains.

**24. Sacajawea.**—Their welcome among the Shoshones was made warmer by Sacajawea, the wife of Charboneau, one of their interpreters, who had joined the party at the Mandan villages. Sacajawea was a Shoshone whom the Mandans had taken captive in her girlhood and her brother happened to be one of the leading chiefs of her people when Lewis and Clark



OREGON TRAIL AND ROUTE OF LEWIS AND CLARK



came among them. There was great joy over her return after so many years and naturally she was able to secure many favors for the explorers. From the Shoshone country the party followed the Lolo Trail across the Bitter Root Mountains to the mouth of the North Fork of the Clearwater River, which they reached in October, 1805.

**25. From the Shoshones to the Ocean.**—This part of the journey was beset with many hardships. The way had to be explored almost step by step, the mountain sides were steep and rocky, the deep canyons dangerous to cross, while all the time the men were suffering from hunger. When, on September 20th, they finally came to a hospitable village of Nez Percés Indians, it is not surprising that the famished travelers overate. Even Captain Clark made himself sick at the feast and had to wait a day or two to recover. At the mouth of the North Fork of the Clearwater the party built five canoes. In these they embarked on the 7th of October, leaving their horses with the kindly Nez Percés, and began the voyage down the Clearwater to the Lewis or Snake, thence down the Lewis to the Columbia, and finally down the Columbia to the Ocean. This part of the journey was completed in just a month. On the 7th of November, 1805, they heard the breakers on the Columbia bar and looked out upon the wide ocean. Their great historic enterprise was accomplished.

**26. The Return.**—Three miles from the mouth of Lewis and Clark River, a little stream which flows into Young's Bay near Astoria, the party built a shelter

from the winter rains, naming it Fort Clatsop, and there passed the time not without hardship until the 23rd of March, 1806, when they set out homeward. The return trip was rich in excitement and discovery, but no serious mishap befell the adventurers and in the mild days toward the end of September,<sup>29</sup> just six months from the time when they left the Pacific, they reached St. Louis, having completed with admirable ability and success one of the crowning achievements of history.

**27. Results of the Expedition.**—In subsequent negotiations with England for the possession of the Oregon country the Lewis and Clark expedition gave the United States firm standing; it confirmed our claim against Spain for the parallel of forty-two degrees as the northern boundary of California, and above all, it aroused a lively interest throughout the nation in the land beyond the Rocky Mountains. Although the journal of the expedition was not published before 1814, still accounts were printed immediately and widely read. There is no doubt that Jefferson's great enterprise turned the American spirit of pioneering adventure strongly toward the farther West. This trend of national feeling never died out but constantly increased. It led to the formation of fur-trading companies, it incited parties of settlers to push deeper and deeper into the country beyond the Mississippi,

<sup>29</sup>The date was September 23, 1806. The party had been on the way, going and returning, two years and a half. The student should read some full account of this remarkable expedition, such as "First Across the Continent" by Noah Brooks.

and it finally culminated in a steady tide of emigration which made Oregon an inseparable part of the Union.

## CHAPTER IV

### JOHN JACOB ASTOR'S COLONY

**28. The Columbia Indians.**—Lewis and Clark found the banks of the Columbia fairly well populated with Indians, but they were filthy and poverty stricken. Their principal food was fish either fresh or dried which they varied by devouring dogs and relished with wapatoes and berries.<sup>30</sup> Their clothing was but scanty, and beyond the preparation of food they had no industry except basket weaving. With savages of this low type there was small hopes of establishing trade at once; still it was possible that they might be educated to better things and taught to desire some of the conveniences or joys of the white men. In that case they might be stimulated to trap the beaver which abounded in the tributaries of the Columbia, particularly about the head waters of the Willamette, and thus a profitable exchange might grow up. Following their instructions from Jefferson, Lewis and Clark described the condition of the Columbia Indians. Learning of the possibilities of trade with them, John Jacob Astor, a famous New York merchant,

<sup>30</sup>The wapato is the tuberous root of a water plant. It was common in the shallow waters of the Columbia flats until the carp was introduced. This useless and destructive fish almost eradicated the wapato and for a time made the wild ducks which fed on them too scarce to please the hunters. The squaws gathered wapatoes by wading out into the shallow water and uprooting them with their toes.



organized a magnificent plan to combine the fur business of the Northwest Coast with that of the Mississippi Valley, under his own control.

**29. Astor's Previous History.**—Mr. Astor had been engaged in the fur trade through Montreal for a long time before the return of Lewis and Clark, and his acute and searching intelligence had mastered all its secrets. He understood how the voyagers collected the furs from the hunting Indians in the remote forests and transported them by canoe to the posts of the Northwest Company scattered over the vast territory between the head waters of the Mississippi and the Arctic Ocean and stretching westward far beyond the summit of the Rocky Mountains.<sup>31</sup> From the solitary posts in the wilderness the furs were collected at central stations and thence every year transported to Montreal whence they were distributed to the markets of the world. Astor had hitherto been merely a distributor. He now aspired to become the rival and perhaps the conqueror of the Northwest Company. At any rate he planned to forestall it along the Missouri and Columbia and exclude it from the trade of Louisiana and the Northwest Coast.

**30. Astor's Great Project.**—The first step in the execution of his vast enterprise was to organize the American Fur Company<sup>32</sup> through which he planned

<sup>31</sup>By 1813 the Northwest Company was building forts in eastern Washington.

<sup>32</sup>The American Fur Company was organized in 1808, two years after the return of Lewis and Clark. The connection of events was therefore close. In the same year, 1808, Mr. Henry, an agent of this company, established Fort Henry on the Snake River (more properly

to control the fur trade of the country from the Great Lakes to the headwaters of the Missouri. Naturally the central post for this company would be St. Louis, since to that city the furs could move down stream from the head waters of the Platte, the Kansas, the Missouri and the Mississippi. The American Fur Company, in Astor's imperial imagination, was to rule the eastern half of his commercial realm. To rule the western half, the country from the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, he established a post at the mouth of the Columbia. Strategetically the situation of this post was as excellent as that of St. Louis. The trade of a great interior region would reach it by merely following the course of the Snake, the Clark, the Columbia and the Willamette rivers with their lesser tributaries. By seizing the key positions at the mouths of the Missouri and Columbia rivers and establishing a continuous line of posts along the inland waters up the Missouri and down the Columbia, Astor planned to control the fur trade of the continent from the Great Lakes to the Pacific, and he planned well. His project failed through the imbecility or treachery of his subordinates and not through inherent defect.

**31. Founding of Astoria.**—To execute that part of his project which related to the Pacific Coast and the Columbia River, Astor organized, in June, 1810, the Pacific Fur Company. He provided the entire capital for the company and held half of its one hundred shares of stock. The remaining shares were equally

Lewis River). See Schafer's judicious remark upon the name of this river. He consistently calls it Lewis as everybody ought.

divided among his partners.<sup>33</sup> These liberal terms were made in order to attract to the new company a number of the ablest members of the Canadian Northwest Company. The attempt was successful. Several of Astor's partners and many of his minor employees were men who had transferred their services if not their allegiance from the Canadian to the American enterprise. He determined to send his first party to the mouth of the Columbia by sea around Cape Horn. It set sail from New York September 6, 1810, in the ill-fated ship *Tonquin* under the cantankerous Captain Thorn<sup>34</sup> who enlivened the long voyage by incessant quarreling with his Canadian passengers.<sup>35</sup> When the mouth of the Columbia was reached, March 22, 1811, a storm was raging and the breakers on the bar terrified the sailors. A wiser captain would have waited for fair weather, but Thorn sacrificed seven men to his impatience by sending them out in the ship's boat to sound the channel among the breakers. Two days later, just at nightfall, the *Tonquin* passed the bar in safety, though the wind still blew a tempest, and the next morning she sailed farther up the channel and found a secure anchorage. The men selected a site

<sup>33</sup>For the first five years Astor was to bear all the loss and divide the profits with his associates. W. P. Hunt of New Jersey, one of the partners, was appointed agent for the first five years and was to reside at the headquarters on the Pacific coast. The particulars are given in Bancroft.

<sup>34</sup>E. W. Wright in his *Marine History of the Pacific Northwest* speaks of Jonathan Thorn as "a headstrong and surly captain."

<sup>35</sup>There were thirty-three of Astor's men on board the "*Tonquin*." Twenty-seven of them were from Canada and twenty had been connected with the Northwest Company in one capacity or another.

for their post, named it Astoria in honor of their chief partner, and began operations by erecting a storehouse and landing the supplies from the Tonquin. On April, 12th, at the spot where the city of Astoria now stands, they started to build a rude log fort which was finished toward the end of July.

**32. Loss of the Tonquin.**—It was part of Mr. Astor's wide plan that a supply ship should reach Astoria each year by way of Cape Horn, land provisions and trading goods for the post, and then proceed along the coast northward to collect furs from the Indians. Laden with her rich cargo the vessel was then to sail for Canton, where the furs would be sold, and taking on a new cargo of Chinese goods she would sail for home, reaching New York again after a voyage of two years. In pursuance of this plan the Tonquin left Astoria on June 5th, long before the fort was finished, and sailed to the North to trade with the Indians for furs. At Gray's Harbor Captain Thorn took on board an Indian interpreter. Some two years later this man made his way back to Astoria and brought the particulars of the terrible catastrophe which befell the Tonquin in Clayoquot Harbor, on the coast of Washington.<sup>36</sup> The savages in this part of the world were known to be treacherous and before Captain Thorn sailed from New York Astor warned him to beware of them. But the foolish captain disregarded all precautions. During the first day's barter at Clayoquot

<sup>36</sup>The interpreter is the sole witness. All accounts of the destruction of the "Tonquin" are based on the narrative which Franchere gives verbatim. The accounts vary only because different writers have sought to improve upon the facts by adding picturesque details.

he fell into a rage with one of the chiefs and thrust him off the ship. The natural effect of this insult was to make the savages furious and when they gathered around the vessel the next day in their canoes pretending friendship and eagerness to trade, Thorn should have known that they were really seeking revenge. Some of his men urged him to be on his guard but his obstinate conceit was invincible.<sup>37</sup> He not only permitted the Indians to fill the ship's deck and distribute themselves as they liked, but he and his men mingled with them unarmed. He could not have furthered the plot of the angry savages better had he deliberately planned to do so. At a certain signal they fell upon the helpless crew and captain and slew them all except four men who had climbed to the rigging and thence slipped down into the cabin where they obtained firearms. With guns in their hands these four men easily drove the Indians from the vessel. If the crew had been armed in the first place as common sense required there would have been no massacre on board the hapless Tonquin. The four men who cleared the deck of the savages put to sea in a boat the next day. Some canoes set out in pursuit of them but whether they were overtaken and slain or whether they perished on the open sea, the interpreter never could learn. Nobody knows what became of them. When the four sailors had rowed away from the Tonquin the Indians cautiously approached and discovering no signs of danger finally crowded upon the deck. Perhaps five hun-

<sup>37</sup>Captain Thorn's conduct reminds one of Braddock at Fort Du Quesne.

dred of them had gathered on the bloody scene of the massacre when suddenly a terrific explosion occurred. Either by accident or design the magazine of the Tonquin had been fired and two hundred of the savages perished with the ship. The interpreter gave himself up as a slave, but two years later his friends at Gray's Harbor rescued him, and thus the story of the destruction of the Tonquin came to light.

**33. Advance to the Interior.**—By July 15, 1811, while the fort at Astoria was still incomplete, a party of Astor's men made ready to depart for the interior to explore the country and build up trade with the Indians, but they were delayed for eight days by a visit from David Thompson, the geographer of the Northwest Fur Company. Acting for his company Mr. Thompson had been busy on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains since 1807. He had established posts on the Kootenai, on Lake Pend d'Oreille, on Clark's Fork in the Flathead country, and finally on the Spokane River. Thus the great monopoly was making its way steadily toward the Ocean. The arrival of Astor's men at Astoria probably disconcerted Thompson's plans for there is little doubt that his trip to the mouth of the Columbia was for the purpose of building a fort at that strategic point. Astor's men received him hospitably, though they did not forego their intention to push forward into the upper country because he had been there before them. Eight days later the Astor party set out under David Stuart and actually built a post on the Okanogan River where they carried on a successful trade the next winter.

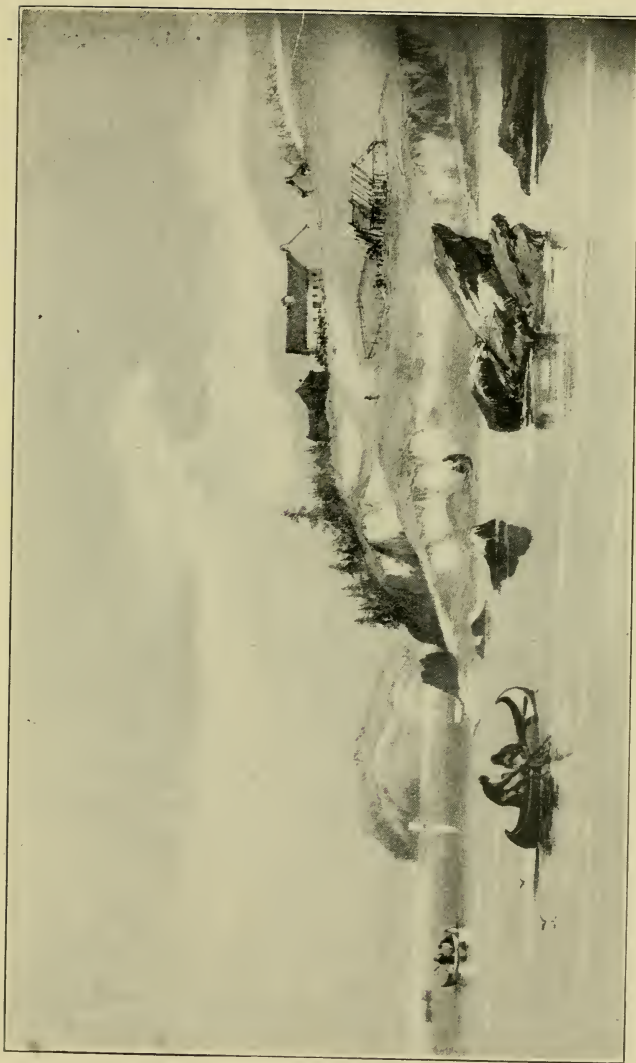


**34. Progress of the Colony.**—Upon the whole, things went fairly well with Astor's project, and if the War of 1812 had not broken out his success would probably have been brilliant. Considering the great distance of Astoria from New York and the wild, ungovernable character of the men upon whom he had to depend, the preliminary mishaps were no more serious than might have been expected. The destruction of the *Tonquin* was nothing more than a miserable incident. It did not essentially injure the enterprise. An overland party which Astor despatched from St. Louis in March, 1811, under W. P. Hunt, one of his partners, met with terrible hardships on the journey to Astoria, but most of the men finally reached the fort in safety. Hunt himself with some of them arrived in February, 1812, and the others straggled in during the following weeks. The party was badly led but not by any means destroyed. A little afterward, on May 10, 1812, Mr. Astor's second ship, the *Beaver*, anchored at Astoria with men and supplies, which put new heart into the enterprise. The preliminary difficulties had been surmounted and fortune seemed ready to smile upon the daring adventure of the New York merchant, when the War of 1812 broke out and put the finishing stroke to his hopes.

**35. The Loss of Astoria.**—W. P. Hunt was to be the managing agent at Astoria for the first five years, but when the news reached the fort that war had begun between America and Great Britain he was absent on a fur-trading expedition and Donald McDougal, one of the Canadian partners was in charge. Hunt had sailed away in the *Beaver* on August 4, 1812, and did

not return for an entire year. In the meantime agents of the Northwest Company haunted the fort and were probably more or less actively engaged in tampering with the loyalty of the men. They sowed discouragement and dissension and insisted that a British ship would soon appear for the capture of the post. Naturally the sympathies of Astor's Canadian partners were with the British. Both patriotism and old associations inclined them to yield to the solicitations of the Northwest Company's emissaries, and by the time Hunt returned to Astoria, August 4, 1813, they had resolved to abandon the enterprise. He sailed away again in search of some vessel to rescue the goods and furs and did not return until February 28, 1814. While he was away the weak or treacherous partners of Astor sold all his property to the Northwest Company and a number of them reëntered its service. On the 12th of December, 1814, a British sloop of war took possession of the place and the name Astoria was changed to Fort George. Thus ended Astor's courageous enterprise at the mouth of the Columbia. Had he been able to secure loyal subordinates there can be little doubt that his success in the end would have been magnificent. He selected the most skillful men he could find, but at the critical moment they played him false. The result was that the profits of the fur trade in the Oregon country went to the British for many years to come.





FORT GEORGE (ASTORIA)



## CHAPTER V

### RULE OF THE FUR COMPANY

**36. Astoria Restored to the United States.**—For the next twenty years after the ruin of Astor's project the history of Oregon is the history of the operations of the Northwest and Hudson Bay Fur Companies in that region. Under the terms of the Treaty of Ghent which closed the War of 1812, the United States demanded the restoration of Astoria and after some diplomatic delay and parleying the British government permitted an American commissioner, J. B. Prevost, to run up the stars and stripes at the fort on October 6, 1818. This in form at least restored the sovereignty of the country to the United States but it made no difference in its practical control. That had been in the hands of the Northwest Company from the day its agents bought out Astor's partners and it remained there still.

**37. Settlement Deferred.**—Even the formal restoration of the sovereignty of Oregon was soon made nugatory, for on October 20, 1818, the United States and Great Britain concluded a treaty which put off the settlement of their conflicting claims<sup>38</sup> for ten years

<sup>38</sup>The British laid stress on the explorations of Vancouver and Broughton and the fact that Broughton had taken formal possession of the country along the Columbia. The Americans, with greater force, emphasized the discovery of the Columbia by Gray, and the fact that he had shown Broughton the way into the river. Our claim

and provided in the meantime for a joint occupation of the country. The question of sovereignty was left open and the subjects of both nations were given equal rights of trade and settlement in Oregon.<sup>39</sup> No doubt each government expected that its own citizens would occupy the country in overwhelming numbers and practically decide the question of ownership in that way before the treaty of joint occupation expired. That did not happen however for many years to come. Ten years later, in 1828, the condition of Oregon was much the same as in 1818, and the treaty was renewed for another period and only terminated in 1846.

**38. Union of the Fur Companies.**—Up to the year 1821 the attention of the Northwest Company was partially diverted from the fur trade to a bitter struggle with its older rival, the Hudson Bay Company. The contest, which almost amounted to a civil war, impaired the energies of both companies and wasted their resources. Wise men on both sides perceived the advantages of coöperation instead of ruinous com-

was strengthened by the consideration that the British had done nothing to occupy the Oregon country up to 1811, while we had sent out the Lewis and Clark expedition and Astor had established his post at the mouth of the Columbia. Upon the whole the United States seems to have yielded a good deal in agreeing to joint occupation.

<sup>39</sup>By this treaty the parallel of forty-nine degrees was fixed as the boundary between the United States and Canada from Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains. From that point westward the boundary of course remained unsettled. The British had their hearts set on the Columbia, the Americans claimed as far north as 54° 40'. Spain still had a vague claim to the Oregon country but in 1819 she gave up to the United States everything north of 42°, retaining California.

petition, and in 1821 the two companies were united. Before that date the fur trade along the Columbia had been conducted with fair profits, but upon the whole rather languidly. Now all was changed.

**39. Dr. McLoughlin Sent to Oregon.**—In 1824 the new organization, called the Hudson Bay Company, sent out Dr. John McLoughlin to take charge of its business in the Columbia region. This remarkable man had a genius for organization and command. He was of a resolute character with great kindliness of disposition. He never tolerated the slightest disobedience in his wide domain and yet his subordinates seem to have mingled genuine affection with unbounded respect for him.<sup>40</sup> In dealing with the Indians he first of all convinced them of his power to enforce his will. When they became submissive, as they invariably did, he treated them with a mingling of paternal severity and kindness which won their hearts and made them the loyal servants of the Company. Dr. McLoughlin was an excellent man of business and an admirable ruler over the wild country which had been assigned to him and the adventurous characters who inhabited it, but he was much more than a mere man of business. He was a far-sighted statesman, enlightened in conduct and liberal in his opinions. He developed the fur trade in the Oregon country until it became the most profitable part of the Company's vast domains. At Vancouver where

<sup>40</sup>His posts covered the country from the Umpqua River in the south to the extreme headwaters of the Columbia and Snake Rivers in the north and east.

he established his headquarters, he introduced farming and stock raising, planted an orchard and built a sawmill and a gristmill.

**40. Settlement Begun.**—The ancient policy of the Hudson Bay Company forbade men to settle in the fur country. It was desired to keep the western wilderness forever as a game preserve inhabited only by wild Indians and the traders. McLoughlin abandoned this unwise policy. He encouraged a number of men who had left the company's service to settle in Oregon and aided them to establish farms.<sup>41</sup> Travelers, explorers, and men of science were always welcome at the Vancouver fort. Even rival traders like Nathaniel Wyeth were received politely, though Dr. McLoughlin knew very well how to guard his commercial interests against their encroachments. Finally, when the missionaries began to arrive and the trains of immigrants to follow them, although McLoughlin must have foreseen the inevitable consequences to the fur business and to British dominion, nevertheless he sold them supplies, relieved their distress and encouraged them with wise counsel. Dr. McLoughlin was often misunderstood by the pioneers and sometimes maligned, but the verdict of history will be that he is clearly entitled to be called the "Father of Oregon."

**41. Life in Oregon.**—Until the arrival of Jason Lee with his missionary party in 1834, we must therefore think of Oregon as a great game preserve for the Hudson Bay Company. Except for the Indians and traders, its forests were solitudes. Its rivers were

<sup>41</sup>They lived in the neighborhood of Champoege.

traveled, only by the canoes which annually bore their loads of beaver and other furs to Vancouver, and except for a few white men and half castes who had settled on the Willamette above Salem, its fertile lands were untilled. The *voyageurs* who paddled the canoes of the company up and down the rivers were a picturesque breed of men, worthy predecessors in romantic charm to the gold seekers and cowboys. At Fort Vancouver life went on with a certain decorum which looked much like civilization. The manners and conversation at the table were refined, but the officers' Indian wives<sup>42</sup> were not permitted to dine with their husbands, and it was not till 1832 that a school existed for their children.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>42</sup>All the white men had Indian wives. The officers at Fort Vancouver were married to squaws of either full or half blood. McLoughlin's wife was half white. Duncan McDougal, who helped sell out Astor at Astoria, was retained in command there by the Northwest Company and married the daughter of old Chief Concomly.

<sup>43</sup>In the winter of 1832 John Ball, who came out with Wyeth on his first trip, taught school at the fort. Learning their letters must have been an odd experience for the little half-breed boys and girls who had never done anything but run about and ride ponies. One can believe that education would not have made better trappers and traders of the boys, but they never got enough of it at Vancouver to injure them.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE FIRST PIONEERS

**42. Remoteness of Oregon.**—Why was it that so few American settlers or adventurers disturbed the sway of the British fur companies in Oregon from 1814 to 1834? There were several reasons. The tide of American life was steadily surging toward Oregon and the Pacific during all that period, but we must remember that the great area of the Mississippi Valley had to be occupied before the billows could roll farther westward. Immigration into this territory was extremely rapid but the region was so vast that everybody who came found land good and plentiful for many years. When at last the best had been selected and people began to crowd each other a little in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Missouri, then the eyes of the adventurous turned to the remote West and fortune began to beckon alluringly from the fertile vales beyond the Rocky Mountains. Again, the reader must remember how slowly popular knowledge of Oregon grew. Lewis and Clark had told little that could attract the homeseeker. Their attention dwelt upon the possibilities of trading in furs with the Indians. The prospect of making the Columbia region a land of farms seemed to them remote and shadowy, if they thought of it at all. Besides, they never saw the best parts of Oregon. When the unhappy stragglers



of W. P. Hunt's party returned to the states they brought a tale of woe which was not likely to induce others to repeat their journey; but the hunters and trappers of the land beyond the Mississippi continually pressed forward toward Oregon and finally entered it both from the south and the east.

**43. Adventures of Jedediah Smith.**—As early as 1826 Jedediah S. Smith with a party of men in the service of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company entered the country west of Great Salt Lake, discovered the Humboldt River and crossed the Sierra Nevada Mountains into the Sacramento Valley.<sup>4</sup> Here he established a camp and returned to Salt Lake the next summer. The same summer, 1827, Smith set out with a number of companions to return to the Sacramento Valley, but on the way the Indians attacked him and slew all of the party except himself and two others. The three fugitives made their way with incredible hardship to the camp in the Sacramento Valley, and thence Smith led his men with their valuable store of furs northward along the coast to the Umpqua River. Here he was again attacked by treacherous savages and barely escaped with his life, losing all his party but three men. Leaving his property in the

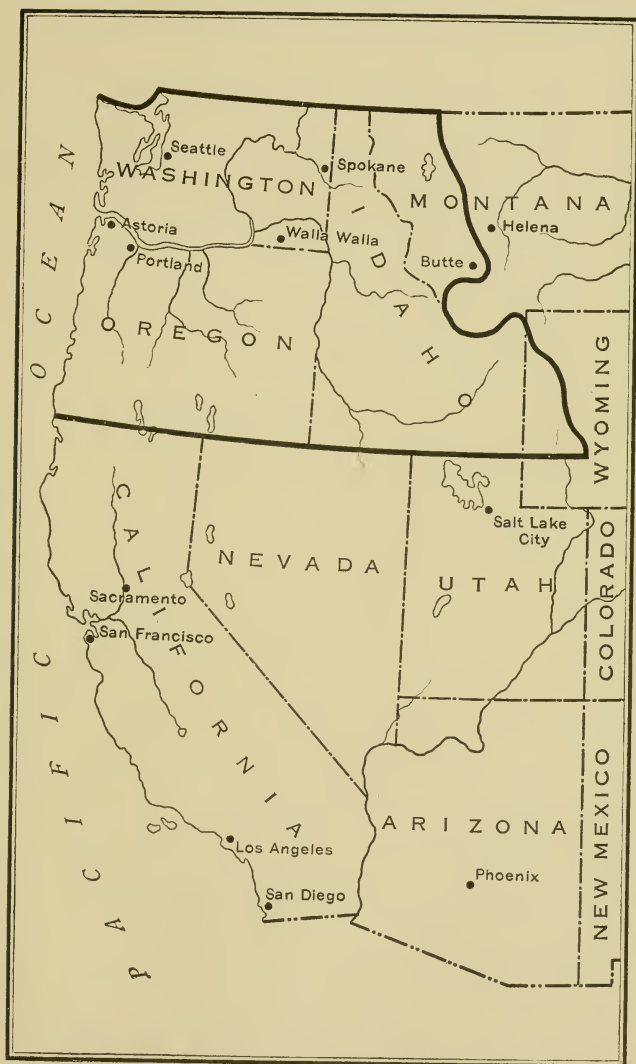
<sup>4</sup>In 1822 General W. H. Ashley formed a fur company at St. Louis which sent parties into the best beaver districts to trap out the streams. Jedediah S. Smith, David Jackson and W. L. Sublette, to whom he sold his business in 1826, pursued the same policy. Smith made his trips for this company. Schafer gives the particulars. Sublette was one of the famous characters of the old trapping days. Ashley's men, in 1823, discovered the South Pass by which later the Oregon trail crossed the mountains.

hands of the Indians who had captured it, Smith made his way to Vancouver. Here, August, 1828, he was kindly received by the officials of the Hudson Bay Company who despatched a party to the Umpqua to punish the Indians and recover his furs. Thomas McKay, the leader of the party, fulfilled his mission successfully.<sup>45</sup> The furs were brought to Vancouver and Smith received some \$40,000 for them from the Hudson Bay Company. The immediate consequence of this adventure was that the Company, perceiving how rich in furs the southern country must be, began to push their trapping expeditions toward California. Smith saw much of the Willamette Valley and undoubtedly told of its beauties wherever he roamed throughout the west.

**44. Ewing Young.**—In 1832 Ewing Young, a famous trapper from Santa Fé, followed Smith's route as far north as the Umpqua. At that point he turned eastward and crossed the mountains, finally making his way back to California.<sup>46</sup> These trips opened the route between Oregon and California and some use was made of it by the pioneers to bring in stock. In

<sup>45</sup>Soon after this McKay built a fort for the Hudson Bay Company on the Umpqua. It was held by a solitary Frenchman with his Indian wife. The Company sent him goods twice a year. Otherwise he had no communication with the world, Mrs. Dye tells the circumstances in her pleasant way in her book on "Dr. McLoughlin and Old Oregon."

<sup>46</sup>Ewing Young returned to Oregon with a band of horses and a small party of men in 1834. The trip was undertaken for the sake of Hall J. Kelley who was then on his way to the Columbia. Young became a noted figure in pioneer history. Pattie's narrative of his trip to the Pacific, which was published in 1832, helped stir up interest in that part of the world.



THE OREGON COUNTRY SOUTH OF THE 49th PARALLEL



the days of the gold seekers it became a much traveled highway.

**45. Difficulties of the Routes to Oregon.**—Men like Jedediah S. Smith and Ewing Young must have spread accounts of Oregon far and wide throughout the western country. Moreover, by this time, 1830, the Mississippi Valley was populous enough to permit of another great westward migration, but no leader had yet appeared to start the movement, and there were other difficulties in the way. Between the fertile strip west of the Mississippi and Oregon there was a wide stretch of country which was then supposed to be desert. Much of it really was desert, and beyond this tract lay the mountains over which it was not certain that wagons could be taken. The matter of a practicable wagon road was very important to the westerner who might wish to go to Oregon. Dwelling far from the sea, they could not send their goods by water and they were loath to leave them behind. In fact they would not attempt to go where they could not transport their belongings. Three trails were ultimately opened across the desert and the Rocky Mountains. The most northerly one Lewis and Clark had followed, but that was out of the question for wagons, while the powerful and treacherous Blackfeet Indians, hostile finally to the whites, made travel upon it extremely hazardous. The Santa Fé Trail which ran from Missouri southwest to New Mexico led far away from Oregon. It was the middle trail, running from Independence up the Platte River and across the South Pass in the mountains, which finally became the great

emigrant route. Ashley's trappers discovered the South Pass as early as 1823, and in 1830, the next year after his misfortunes on the Umpqua, Jedediah S. Smith with some companions drove loaded wagons to the head of Wind River in the Rocky Mountains and brought back word that they could easily have taken them over the Pass. It was the gradual opening of a practicable wagon road to Oregon which really made emigration possible. The progress of wheeled vehicles through the mountains was more important in the history of Oregon than almost any other series of events. Hence it is worth while for the student to remember that in 1833 Captain Bonneville actually drove wagons through the South Pass along the line of the Oregon trail to westward flowing waters.

**46. Bonneville's Enterprise Fails.**—Captain Bonneville's purpose was to invade the Oregon country and compete in the fur business with the Hudson Bay Company on its own ground. Beginning his adventurous career as a fur trader in 1832, he spent three years in the region of the Lewis River (Snake River) and pushed his explorations as far as Fort Walla Walla, which is now called Wallula. But Captain Bonneville had to contend with the wiles of both the independent American traders and the thoroughly organized agents of the Hudson Bay Company, and between them they made short work of his commercial ambitions. His enterprise failed completely.<sup>47</sup>

**47. Wyeth and Kelley.**—The efforts of Nathaniel

<sup>47</sup>The student will find it interesting to read Washington Irving's "Adventures of Captain Bonneville."

J. Wyeth to carry on the fur trade in Oregon also failed, but he is a more notable figure in history than Captain Bonneville because of his connection with Jason Lee. Wyeth made two expeditions to Oregon for the purpose of trade, and both were futile. He seems to have been a man of a romantic disposition who plunged into western adventure without much real knowledge of its conditions and hardships. His interest in the Pacific Coast was awakened by the writings of Hall J. Kelley, a Boston school-teacher, whose mind became a little unbalanced with excitement over the Oregon controversy with Great Britain, and who kept his schemes of occupation and settlement before the public for many years beginning with 1815. He gathered a great deal of information about Oregon, organized a society to promote its colonization, and in spite of his vagaries, interested many persons of consequence in his plans.<sup>48</sup> Finally, Kelley made a trip to the Pacific Coast which was as full of adventure as

<sup>48</sup>In 1832 Kelley set out from Boston to make a trip to Oregon, the land of promise. He chose to go by way of Mexico and thence through California where he fell in with Ewing Young in the summer of 1834. Young went with him to Oregon taking along about a dozen men and a band of horses. On the Umpqua Kelley fell ill of intermittent fever, but La Framboise of the Hudson Bay Company treated him with quinine and venison broth and soon cured him. Arriving at Vancouver Kelley found that Young and himself had been posted by the Spaniards as horse thieves. Dr. McLoughlin could therefore hardly receive him on the footing of a gentleman, though he provided for Kelley's necessities, and in 1836 sent him back to Boston, which he never ought to have left, by way of the Sandwich Islands. Wyeth was at Vancouver during this period but he paid no attention to Kelley. This seems somewhat ungrateful seeing that it was Kelley's writings which started Wyeth westward.



the most romantic heart could desire, but it did not lead to any definite results.

**48. Wyeth's First Expedition.**—Nathaniel J. Wyeth began operations in much the same way as Astor did. He sent his goods for the Indian trade around Cape Horn and set out with a small party to go to Oregon overland and meet the vessel at Vancouver. The ship<sup>49</sup> sailed in the fall of 1831. Wyeth and his men set out the next spring going first to Baltimore by water and thence by the new Baltimore and Ohio Railroad westward for sixty miles. Down the Ohio River to St. Louis they went by steamer, and in the same way up the Missouri as far as Independence, where the Oregon Trail struck northwestward for the Platte. Even then this trail was pretty well traveled as far as Green River. At Independence Wyeth fell in with William Sublette, the famous trapper, who was starting for the mountains with sixty-two men. He guided the party safely across the plains but in the mountains the men fell sick from the hardships they had to endure. Disappointed and forlorn they grew mutinous. Some deserted, but with the eleven men who remained true to him Wyeth pushed on through starvation and hostile Indians to Vancouver. In a wretched condition he

<sup>49</sup>Wyeth's ship was wrecked in the Sandwich Islands. His party consisted of his brother, his cousin and nineteen workingmen of various trades. They prepared for the expedition in grand style, holding regular drills, dressing in uniform and carrying a fine outfit of weapons. Before leaving for Baltimore, Wyeth held a Wild West show in Boston Harbor for ten days. The expedition was a holiday affair almost to the base of the Rocky Mountains. Then it took on a more serious aspect and all but eleven of the bold adventurers went back home.

reached the fort October 24, 1832. Although Wyeth came as a rival in trade Dr. McLoughlin received him with boundless hospitality. Of course he could not buy furs without his goods, which had been lost with his ship, but he studied the conditions of the country, laid new plans, and in 1833 returned to Boston filled with the determination to undertake another expedition under better auspices.<sup>50</sup> He was now resolved to combine salmon fishing with the fur trade, and he induced the Boston merchants who had formerly aided him to fit out another ship for Oregon. This vessel, famous in the annals of the Pacific Coast, was named the *May Dacre*.<sup>51</sup> She sailed late in the year 1833, while Wyeth set out overland on his second expedition the following March.

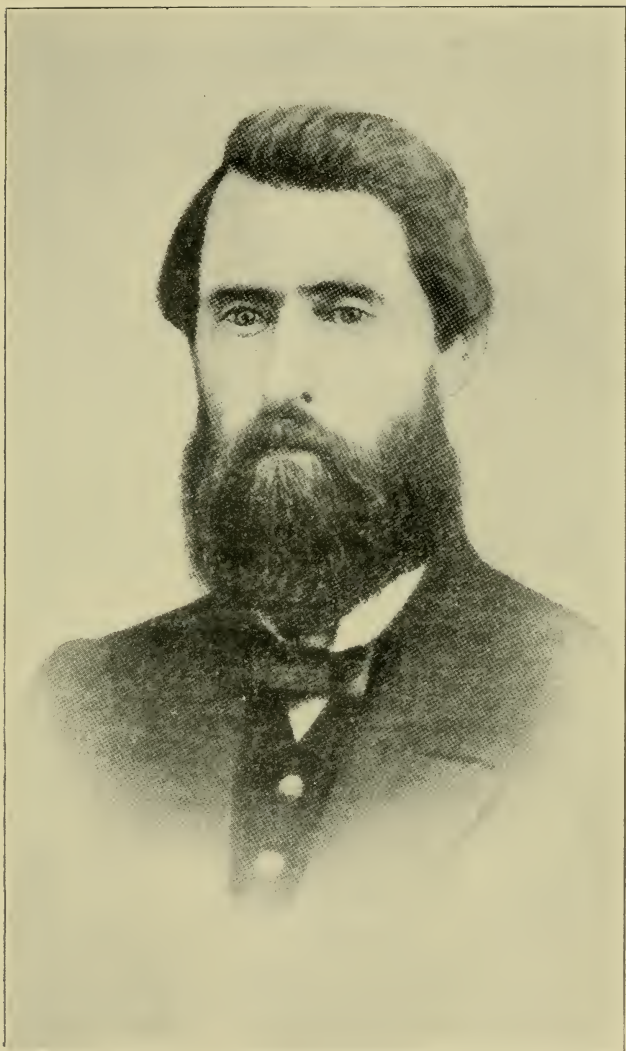
<sup>50</sup>Dr. McLoughlin must have known that Wyeth's trip was the beginning of the end of the British monopoly in Oregon. Other parties were certain to follow and agricultural settlement must speedily drive out the beaver. Still he met Wyeth as he did the later immigrants with noble hospitality, though he never forgot the interest of the Company. Some of Wyeth's eleven men stayed in Oregon and took up farms.

<sup>51</sup>Wyeth was a man of vigorous physique and engaging personality who won confidence wherever he went. He had no difficulty in obtaining the ship and supplies for this second expedition nor in raising men to follow him.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MISSION AT SALEM

**49. The Nez Perces Send for the Bible.**—At about the time when Wyeth made his first trip to the Columbia one of those seemingly unimportant events occurred in the West which now and then alter the aspect of human affairs and determine the course of history. In 1831, or perhaps a year later, the Nez Perce Indians for some unknown reason decided to send four of their leading men to St. Louis to ask for the white man's "Book of Heaven." It is quite likely that the Indians had learned from the wandering trappers something of the beauties of the Christian religion, coupled with such criticisms upon their own primitive rites as those freespoken men would not hesitate to make. The Nez Perces were a comparatively intelligent tribe with vigorous bodies and active brains. Doubtless their curiosity was awakened. They were eager to learn the way to heaven which the trappers must have pictured to them as an extremely attractive place. They remembered General Clark from the time, nearly thirty years before, when he was in their country on his expedition to the coast, and of course they also knew that he was then the government's Indian agent at St. Louis. Hence it was natural enough for them to send to him for a copy of the Bible and some one to explain it to them.



REVEREND JASON LEE



**50. Consequences of the Visit of the Nez Perces.—**

The four messengers from the Nez Perces reached St. Louis safely and were kindly received by General Clark. When three of them fell sick Clark took them into his house and cared for them,<sup>52</sup> but in spite of his ministrations two died. The other two spent the winter in St. Louis and in the spring went back to their own country without a missionary, but they had kindled a fire behind them in the minds of men which was not to be quenched until Oregon had been settled by civilized immigrants.<sup>53</sup> Christianity is emphatically a missionary religion. The zeal of the churches to spread the gospel among the heathen may sometimes slumber but it never dies. The news of these Indians and their pathetic errand roused it to strenuous activity. The churches had heard a Macedonian call and missionaries with holy zeal took up the cross and bore it among the western savages. Civilization and liberty attended their footsteps. The Methodists were the first to act. G. P. Disosway published an account of the four Nez Perces in the Methodist papers in February, 1833. In March, just as Wyeth was starting back home from Vancouver, President Wilbur Fiske of Wilbraham College, issued one of those trumpet calls for men which have never

<sup>52</sup>G. P. Disosway, the man who gave the money to found the Methodist missionary society in 1819, saw them lying sick in Clark's house and talked the matter over with Clark. Disosway sent the news of the visit of the Indians and their errand far and wide.

<sup>53</sup>They seem to have returned by the Lewis and Clark route. One more died at the mouth of the Yellowstone. Catlin, the Scotch traveler and artist, went with them for two thousand miles of the way and painted their pictures which are reproduced in Atwood's "Conquerors."

failed to enlist new volunteers in the army of the martyrs. "Money shall be forthcoming," he wrote. "All we want is the men. Who will go?"

**51. Jason Lee Appointed Missionary Superintendent and Joins Wyeth.**—The first volunteer was Jason Lee, Canadian by birth, ordained to preach in the Methodist church in the United States. He was a man of strong body, gifted with great common sense, burning eloquence and the power to lead and control men. Appointed Superintendent of the Flathead missions in July, 1833, Lee spent the rest of the summer traveling and preaching in the cause. Meanwhile, almost as if providential forethought had arranged it, Wyeth was fitting out his second expedition in Boston. On December 13th, Lee met him at Cambridge and, taking advantage of opportunity, agreed with Wyeth to ship his goods in the *May Dacre* and to join his overland party in the spring.<sup>54</sup> There is no doubt that Lee had large plans from the outset, intending to make his mission a nucleus for settlement and American dominion. With the zeal of the missionary he combined the far-sighted wisdom of the statesman.<sup>55</sup> In the middle

<sup>54</sup>Schafer says the *May Dacre* "went down the coast in the fall." She did not actually set sail on her voyage until after December 13. The train of coincidences in preparation for Lee's mission seems half miraculous. First came Wyeth's former trip in which he learned western ways and became an accomplished guide and plainsman, knowing the trail, the Indians, and places for feed and water. The missionary zeal of the churches awakens as if to take advantage of Wyeth's experience, and Jason Lee meets him in the nick of time to join fortunes with him. For those who see design in human affairs was there ever a more striking example?

<sup>55</sup>Jason Lee was keenly alive to the importance of money even to a missionary. He raised a large sum by his sermons.



of March, 1834, when he joined Wyeth at Independence the party was assembling.<sup>56</sup> In April it started across the plains following the route which became later the Oregon Trail. It was a gay cavalcade consisting of seventy men and two hundred and fifty horses, well provided for and well led. Wyeth was himself by this time a seasoned plainsman, while his old friend Milton Sublette, a trapper of long experience and many adventures, was also of the band. Jason Lee with his fellow missionaries kept somewhat on the outskirts of the worldly party sedately driving their cattle.<sup>57</sup> Naturally Jason Lee could not help preaching to Wyeth's wild followers, and at first they rather resented his rebukes, but as time passed and they began to understand his wide humanity and feel his deep sincerity they ceased to ridicule him. Respect and even affection took the place of rancor, and the conscientious missionary became a favorite with the free plainsmen.

**52. From Independence to Fort Hall.**—Striking west from Independence the party crossed the Kansas River on the sixth day out, then turning northward and riding through plains covered with thrifty grasses, on the twentieth day they came to the South Fork of

<sup>56</sup>Lee had four companions, his nephew Daniel Lee, who was also a preacher and apparently a good one, and three lay brethren, Cyrus Shepherd, P. L. Edwards and C. M. Walker.

<sup>57</sup>Lee took his cattle as far as Walla Walla but there, since the season was late and feed scarce, he traded them to the Hudson Bay Company. At Vancouver Dr. McLoughlin loyally turned over eight cows to Lee and sent men to help him drive them to Salem. The Hudson Bay Company, however, disliked to sell breeding animals to the settlers.

the Platte whose broad but shallow stream they followed for six days more over a level prairie where the buffalo grazed in numberless thousands. The trail now crossed the South Fork of the Platte by a ford and struck through a desert waste to the northern branch which it followed on the southern side, over a country of rugged hills past Scott's Bluff, where in the older days an unhappy trader falling sick was deserted by his companions and left to die; then through great forests it ran to the banks of the Laramie Fork where Fort Laramie was afterward to stand. On the 1st of June, Wyeth with Jason Lee still in his train, crossed the Laramie, and a week later, June 7, 1834, after passing the gloomy Black Hills, the party came down into a barren plain where sage brush grew. Two days later they bade farewell to the Platte which they had followed so long and traversed a forlorn waste to Independence Butte on the banks of the Sweetwater. On the granite face of this landmark famous trappers had chiseled their names, William Sublette and his brother Milton, the loyal friend of Wyeth, Bonneville, and others of the adventurous tribe. Some of Wyeth's party climbed the granite cliff and added their names to the enduring roll. Looking ninety miles to the northwest they could see the white peaks of the Wind River Mountains piercing the sky and inviting them onward, but it was not till the 14th of June that they took up the trail again, for on the Sweetwater there was pasture for the hungry horses and rest for the men, while thenceforward as far as the Sandy River, which was their next station, there was neither grass nor

water.<sup>58</sup> Down the Sandy they traveled to the Green River, reaching it June 19th, and came to the "rendezvous," a fertile valley sunk in the desolate plain where grass grew luxuriantly, buffalo, antelope and elk abounded and the streams were full of fish. This was a great meeting place of trappers. Wyeth's party found many others there before them and until July 2nd they lingered in the lovely nook, while there was trading, carousing and wild jollity among the men. Since drink was plentiful Jason Lee must have witnessed scenes at Green River which saddened his heart.<sup>59</sup> Traveling northwest from Green River Wyeth encountered, July 9, Thomas McKay, an agent of the Hudson Bay Company, who was hunting with a party of Canadians and Indians.<sup>60</sup> The next day he fell in with Bonneville and his men who had been on a long trip and were resting in camp. They had now reached a section of the wilderness where enterprise was active. On July 14 they came to the Lewis (Snake) River. Here Wyeth decided to erect a fort, which he called Fort Hall. While Wyeth's men were at work on the fort, which was a substantial structure,

<sup>58</sup>On the Sweetwater Jason Lee wrote a letter home which was printed in the *Christian Advocate*. It read to the wondering Methodists like a message from the other world. The Sweetwater seemed far away to easterners in those days. Perhaps to many of them it is not much nearer now.

<sup>59</sup>The usual performances at the rendezvous were something frightful. Bancroft says that on this occasion there was the "usual mixture of mirth and murder brooding, of obstreperous jollity, whooping, roaring and wolfish snarling." It was no place for a tenderfoot.

<sup>60</sup>McKay's Indians were pleased to learn that Lee was a missionary. To show their good will they gave him two horses.

Thomas McKay visited the place, perhaps with an eye to business,<sup>61</sup> and on Sunday, July 27th, two of his wild followers ran a horse race in which one of them lost his life. At the funeral of this unhappy man Jason Lee preached his first sermon west of the Rocky Mountains.

**53. From Fort Hall to Vancouver.**—On July 30, 1834, the missionaries left Wyeth at Fort Hall and keeping company with Thomas McKay drove their cattle straight through to Walla Walla, which they reached by September 1. Wyeth lingered to see the fort completed and the United States flag raised over it, August 5th; then, on the next day, he again took the trail westward. At Walla Walla he rejoined Lee and his party, who had disposed of their cattle to the Hudson Bay people and had engaged a barge to carry themselves down the river to Vancouver. Wyeth took passage with the others and all arrived safely at Vancouver by September 16, 1834. Jason Lee preceded the rest of the party by a few days and was waiting for them with Dr. McLoughlin in front of the fort when they arrived. Thus ended the memorable journey which began the colonization of Oregon.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup>The Hudson Bay Company forthwith built a rival fort at Boise which captured all of Wyeth's trade.

<sup>62</sup>The student should follow Wyeth and Lee across the continent with a map of the Oregon Trail before him. This was one of the great historic highways along which empire has traveled. Lee escaped the worst part of the trail, from the Walla Walla River to The Dalles, by taking to the water. The hardships of the pioneers were most severe near The Dalles, since they reached it when the season was late, the rains were coming on, their beasts were worn, their wagons broken down, and their food almost gone. By giving timely assistance at this critical place Dr. McLoughlin saved many lives from time to time.

**54. Wyeth's Second Failure.**—Wyeth's ship, the *May Dacre*, entered the Columbia the day after his party reached Vancouver. This was of course a lucky coincidence since it enabled both Wyeth and the missionaries to proceed with their plans without delay. Wyeth after exploring the country around the mouth of the Willamette fixed upon Wapato, or Sauvie's, Island for the site of his trading post and at a spot near the the southern end of the island, he began a structure which he named Fort William. This fort was completed in the winter of 1834-5, together with several good log houses. Wyeth raised the United States flag over the post when it was done. In all ways he acted like an energetic, capable, patriotic man of affairs, but his enterprise was not successful. Dr. McLoughlin was extremely polite to him, but he used his great influence with the Indians to hold their trade for the Hudson Bay Company. The salmon fishery was less lucrative than Wyeth had expected. In spite of all his efforts his enterprise languished. By the summer of 1836 he had broken up his establishment on Sauvie's Island. He then returned to Boston and finally sold all his possessions in the Oregon country, including Fort Hall, to the Hudson Bay Company.

**55. Founding of Lee's Mission.**—The plans of the missionaries had a far different outcome. Ever since he entered Oregon Jason Lee had doubtless been vigilantly seeking a suitable site for his station. He had been commissioned to preach to the tribes on the upper Columbia and the Lewis Rivers, but in his own

mind agriculture was inseparably linked with the success of the gospel, and in those apparently desert wastes he could at that time see no prospect of fruitful fields.<sup>63</sup> He therefore kept his mind open as to the choice of a site until he had consulted with Dr. McLoughlin and had explored the lower part of the Willamette Valley. In this charming region he found that Indians were numerous and that their souls were at least as much in need of salvation as those of the Nez Perces. He saw that the situation was almost perfect for a farming colony and he could not discern without further acquaintance how hopelessly indolent, diseased and worthless the valley Indians were. Jason Lee therefore altered his original plans and chose for the site of his mission a spot in the Willamette Valley not far from where Salem now stands.<sup>64</sup> To this place the missionaries transferred their goods from the May Dacre and forthwith began the erection of a house from squared logs. By the first of November they were under shelter from the autumn rains.

**56. Oregon in 1834.**—Since the real settlement of Oregon by Americans begins with this missionary colony on the Willamette, it will be well to pause here and review the condition of the country. Oregon was at that time completely controlled by the Hudson Bay Company whose efficient head factor was Dr.

<sup>63</sup>Irrigation and wheat farming have transformed this desolate region into a productive empire, but Jason Lee could not foresee the distant future. He chose wisely in the circumstances.

<sup>64</sup>It was two miles above Joseph Gervais's farm, on the east bank of the Willamette, and sixty miles from its mouth.



John McLoughlin. The principal post of the monopoly was at Vancouver, but it had numerous other posts situated at advantageous points from the Umpqua to the extreme upper tributaries of the Columbia and Lewis Rivers. From all these places the harvest of furs was brought annually to Vancouver and thence sent away by sea. It was the policy of the Hudson Bay Company to make this state of things perpetual since settlement would naturally interfere with the production of furs. Still the benign character of Dr. McLoughlin did not permit him to adhere rigorously to this barbarous policy, and, somewhat contrary to the rules of the Company, he had encouraged several French Canadians, old servants who wished to lead a peaceful life, to take up farms on French Prairie<sup>65</sup> and had supplied them with tools, cattle and seed. Here they dwelt in idyllic serenity, not very industrious, knowing nothing of the world, content with their Indian wives, their half-breed children and their slaves. Living on French Prairie at the time of the arrival of Jason Lee there were also a few white men who had come into the country with W. P. Hunt on his unfortunate overland trip in 1812. In October, 1834, Hall J. Kelley brought in a little band of whites from California, among them the noted Ewing Young, who after-

<sup>65</sup>French Prairie includes the tract from Champoege south to Lake La Biche and from Pudding River to the Willamette. It is a fertile garden spot. To the northwest across the Willamette lies the charming Chehalem valley where Thomas McKay took up his farm and where Ewing Young afterward built his sawmill. North of French Prairie lies the rich valley of the Tualitin River. This entire tract is extremely productive.



ward took up farms here and there along the Willamette; and when Wyeth finally gave up and left the country a number of his men joined the American colony.<sup>66</sup> At the time of Jason Lee's arrival the white settlers in the Willamette Valley, Americans and Canadians, numbered about a dozen men.

**57. Progress of Lee's Mission.**—The missionaries labored at building and farming with their own hands. As soon as their house was habitable they began to plow and fence land. By spring, 1835, they had thirty acres enclosed with a rail fence and planted with wheat, corn, oats and vegetables. They also built a barn which was probably more comfortable than their house since its floors and doors were made of sawed lumber.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup>Joseph Gervais came with Hunt. So did Michel La Framboise, who saved Hall J. Kelley's life when he fell sick on the way to Vancouver. John Ball, who came with Wyeth on his first trip, taught the first school west of the mountains at Vancouver in 1833, beginning January 1. In the following March Solomon H. Smith, probably another of Wyeth's men, succeeded Ball. With Kelley and Ewing Young in 1834, eight men reached the Columbia. One of them, George Winslow, was a negro. The most noted member of the party, after the two leaders, was Joseph Gale who helped build the first vessel launched in Oregon, "The Star of Oregon," and sailed to California as her master. After mining in California he returned to Oregon and lived in various parts of the state, finally settling in the beautiful mountain retreat called Eagle Valley about thirty miles from Baker City. Here from sixteen acres of land he sold \$2,000 worth of produce in one year, though this would not be deemed a very heavy yield now from the irrigated soil of that delectable garden. Joseph Gale died in Eagle Valley at the age of ninety-two years.

<sup>67</sup>Two of the men who came with Hall J. Kelley were hired to saw the lumber by hand. The buildings were shingled with "shooks" split from four-foot fir bolts. Cedar, which would have been better, does not seem to have been available at the mission.

At the same time the missionaries kept up religious services among the settlers and made more or less effort to interest the Indians; but the natives were a pitiful race to whom the gospel seems to have made but a feeble appeal. A number of orphan children from different localities came to the mission at one time and another to be educated in the Christian religion, and some of them were perhaps benefited, but many died. Some were fatally diseased when they came to the mission, others contracted tuberculosis as savages so often do when they try to live in houses. The numerous deaths among the children at the mission, as well as the sickness among the whites themselves,<sup>68</sup> seem to have inspired the Indians with a superstitious aversion to the place. The missionaries failed to win their confidence and never exercised much influence over them.

**58. The Willamette Cattle Company.**—Since their labors among the Indians met with so little encouragement, Jason Lee and his colleagues naturally devoted themselves after a time to the spiritual and temporal interests of the whites. They not only preached every Sunday at Gervais's house, but they also opened a Sunday school and, in 1836, formed a Temperance

<sup>68</sup>The missionaries seem to have paid too little attention to pure air and hygiene. Jason Lee was frequently sick during the first year or two, though he was naturally a robust man, and his wife died within a year after she arrived. The whites ascribed much of their sickness to "malaria," but we hear of no malaria among the settlers at other places. There was much overcrowding and some neglect of obvious precautions. When Anna Marie Pitman, Lee's bride, arrived at the mission house it contained thirty-eight Indian children of whom more than twelve were sick.

Society to combat the evil influence of a distillery which Ewing Young threatened to establish.<sup>69</sup> In January, 1837, they efficiently assisted the settlers to form the Willamette Cattle Company to which Dr. McLoughlin and William A. Slacum also subscribed.<sup>70</sup> The object of the company was to purchase a herd of cattle in California where they were numerous and cheap and drive them overland to Oregon.<sup>71</sup> Eleven men were despatched on this errand of whom P. L. Edwards and Ewing Young were the leaders, and Slacum, to promote the good of the colony, gave them free passage on his ship, the *Loriot*. They set out from the mission on January 17, 1837, and reached California

<sup>69</sup>Young was embittered by the accusation of being a horsethief which Dr. McLoughlin and everybody else in Oregon seem to have believed for some time. It was finally contradicted by Governor Figueroa himself and Dr. McLoughlin did what he could to make amends for his error, but Young remained unforgiving, assumed the attitude of a misanthrope and diligently talked against British control. He obtained some of the implements of his distillery from Wyeth when Fort William was abandoned in 1836, but the persuasions of the Temperance Society with those of William A. Slacum induced him to abandon the plan.

<sup>70</sup>Slacum was sent to the Pacific coast in 1835 by President Jackson to collect information for the government. At the instance of Hall J. Kelley, who had returned to the east and told a woeful tale of British persecution and tyranny in Oregon, Slacum was despatched thither from California to investigate the condition of the settlers and find out what he could about the country. He charted the Columbia, mapped the Indian villages, visited Dr. McLoughlin and sojourned a few days with the missionaries at Salem. The need of cattle naturally impressed him and he helped along the project of importing a herd from California. Slacum left Oregon Feb. 10, 1837.

<sup>71</sup>Cattle were still scarce in Oregon as late as 1839, when Dr. McLoughlin declined to supply a British squadron with beef. He never refused cattle to the settlers when it was possible for him to furnish them.

toward the end of the month. After vexatious delays a herd of eight hundred cattle was procured from the Spaniards which the men drove to Oregon, suffering extreme hardships on the route. It was the 12th of September, 1837, when they reached the Rogue River, and the middle of October before they completed their journey to the mission. About six hundred head of cattle were brought safely through which were distributed among the subscribers to the company at seven dollars and sixty-seven cents a head. The introduction of this herd marks the beginning of real agricultural progress in the Willamette Valley.

**59. Arrival of Reinforcements.**—The year of 1837 not only saw agriculture placed upon a firm basis in the Willamette Valley, but it also brought welcome recruits to the missionaries. On the 18th of May a party arrived at Vancouver which had sailed from Boston almost a year before and suffered a long delay at the Sandwich Islands. Besides several children, this party included eight adults, among them a physician, the celebrated Elijah White,<sup>72</sup> whose services and counsel were greatly needed at the mission, a blacksmith named Alanson Beers, who must have been almost as useful as the physician, and W. H. Wilson, a ship carpenter from New Bedford.<sup>73</sup> But the most interesting member of this party was Miss Anna Maria Pitman of New York, who came out with the partially

<sup>72</sup>Dr Elijah White was a shallow, intriguing man of popular manners and not too much principle. He had difficulty with Lee about the finances of the new hospital and went back east.

<sup>73</sup>Beers was a Connecticut blacksmith. Wilson was a strong, kindly man liked by everybody. He had been a whaler.

formed purpose of marrying Jason Lee.<sup>74</sup> After a romantic courtship attended by long rides and pleasant camping trips, their wedding took place on the 16th of June. The 7th of September, 1837, saw the arrival at Vancouver of a second party destined to strengthen Lee's mission. It had sailed from Boston in the January preceding and consisted of two ministers, three women and three children.<sup>75</sup> These recruits raised the population of the mission to sixty persons, of whom about half were white and the rest Indians. The women must have humanized the life of the place a great deal and probably their mundane common sense soon made the conditions both physically and spiritually more healthy than they had been. The Willamette mission is now firmly established. If not very successful in saving the Indians, it has become the center of a vigorous American colony and we shall leave it for a time to follow the more tragic fortunes of the Whitman missions in the interior.

<sup>74</sup>Miss Pitman was a woman of much charm. She had some poetic gifts and was extremely devout. Her fate was a sad one as we shall see.

<sup>75</sup>The ministers were H. K. W. Perkins and David Leslie. With Leslie came his wife and three little daughters. The other women were Margaret Smith and Miss Johnson, both unmarried. Miss Smith married William Johnson, November 21, 1837.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WHITMAN MISSIONS

#### 60. Parker and Whitman Set Out for Oregon.—

Moved by the pathetic story of the four Nez Percés who came to St. Louis seeking the Bible and the white man's God, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in March, 1835, sent out the Reverend Samuel Parker to make a preliminary exploration of the Oregon field. Parker was a man of studious habits, refined tastes and strict piety. To the westerners he seemed rather punctilious in his deportment, but he must have been inspired with fervent zeal to undergo the hardships he did in the missionary cause and he must withal have enjoyed the adventures of travel for he explored the country about the Columbia and Lewis Rivers with exemplary thoroughness. When he reached St. Louis, April 4, 1835, he was joined by Dr. Marcus Whitman, whom the American Board had appointed to be his associate. Whitman was a much younger man than Parker, being then thirty-two years old. He was of robust frame, spare and sinewy, with blue eyes, and hair which was already turning gray. Mentally alert, he was enterprising almost to rashness, extremely persistent, and in emergencies his courage never faltered. A touch of the romantic softened the somewhat rugged outlines of his character. He loved to surprise his friends with little dramatic episodes. For example, when he reached the east after the fearful

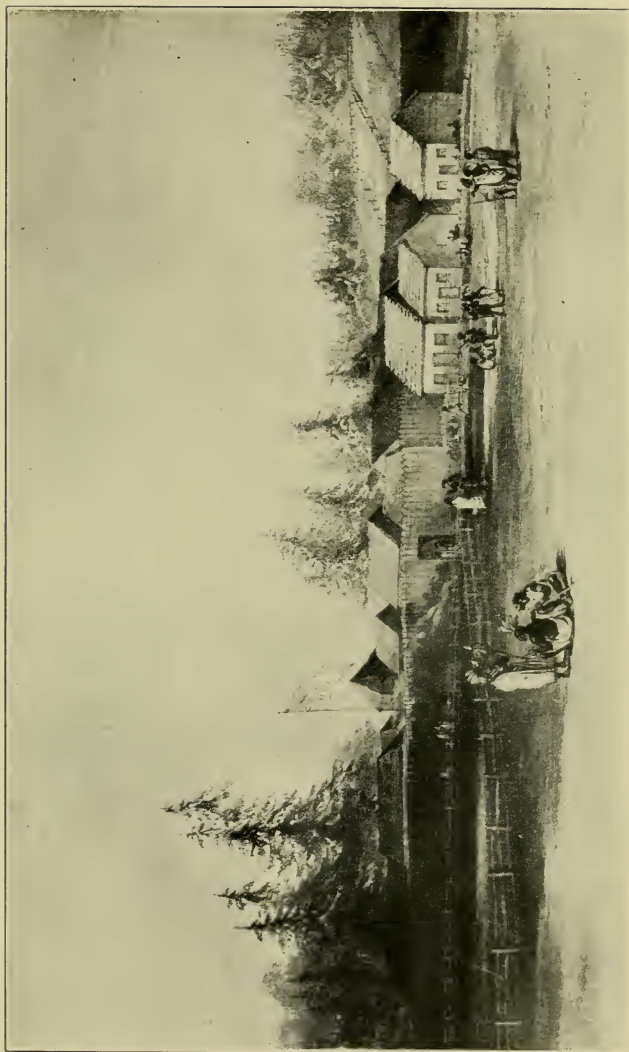


winter journey of which we shall speak later, he did not discard his leathern garments but wore them in church, in the houses of his friends, and at Washington among the government officials.

**61. Parker's Travels.**—From St. Louis to Liberty, Missouri, Parker and Whitman traveled by steamer. At Liberty they joined a caravan led by Fontenelle, a trader of the American Fur Company, and under his convoy crossed the plains to Green River, where they fell in with a band of Flatheads and Nez Perces who were delighted to learn of their purpose.<sup>76</sup> Convinced by this that missions would be welcomed by the Indians of the Columbia, Whitman returned to the east to procure the necessary means while Parker continued his journey to the far west. As far as Pierre Hole on the head waters of the Lewis River he traveled under the protection of Captain Bridger who was going that way with sixty men, but from Pierre Hole to Fort Walla Walla he traveled with no companions but the Indians. The route lay over the Salmon River and Kooskooskie Mountains, on whose desolate ranges Parker underwent dire suffering, but finally, August 28, 1835, he reached the hospitable country of the Nez Perces and was received with a joyous welcome. Arriving at Walla Walla on October 6, Parker ex-

<sup>76</sup>Parker and Whitman did not at the outset follow the same route as Jason Lee. They went from Liberty to Council Bluffs and struck westward from Bellevue, a place on the west bank of the Missouri a few miles below Omaha. Parker showed from the outset his insatiable appetite for travel. From Liberty he improved a three weeks delay by visiting Leavenworth and from Bellevue he made a side trip to see some missionaries to the Pawnees.





FORT VANCOUVER



perienced the rare luxuries of dining at a table and sitting on a chair, and Pambrun, the agent, tempted him to linger by spreading a feast of roast duck with bread, milk and sugar; but his eager soul permitted him only two days rest at the fort. On the 8th of October he embarked in a canoe provisioned by the careful Pambrun and with three sturdy Walla Wallas for oarsmen he descended the Columbia through rapids which sometimes frightened him, visiting the savages by the way and receiving everywhere a glad welcome, to The Dalles, where he arrived on the 12th. Here he met Captain Wyeth on a journey to his post at Fort Hall and received from that accomplished adventurer a useful vocabulary of the Chinook jargon.<sup>77</sup> At The Dalles Parker exchanged his Walla Walla canoemen for Wascos, and resumed the descent of the river through dismal rains, but on the 16th he was surprised by the sight of the men at work around Dr. McLoughlin's sawmill, and on the afternoon of the same day the Chief Factor welcomed the persevering missionary at Vancouver. Resolute in pursuing his duty, Parker stayed but one day at the fort. Then he went on board the May Dacre, Wyeth's ship which had brought Jason Lee's goods, now beginning her homeward voyage, and sailed down to the mouth of the Columbia, everywhere studying the Indians as they sought the ship to trade and contrasting the degraded character of these redmen

<sup>77</sup>The Chinook jargon is a mongrel language containing a few hundred words derived from English, French, Chinese, Indian and perhaps other sources. Traders and travelers used it along the Columbia and up the northwest coast. There are white men still living who can speak it.

with the sturdy manliness of the tribes of the upper river. The winter of 1835-6 Parker passed at Vancouver enjoying the abundant hospitality of Dr. McLoughlin. In the spring, April 14, 1836, he set out on his journey homeward, intending to go by way of Green River and across the plains, but the Nez Percés, with whom he was traveling, insisted upon taking the trail over the Salmon River Mountains where the missionary explorer had nearly lost his life by hardship the year before. Rather than go with them over that dreadful route he gave up his plan of making the overland trip to the east and resolved to return by water. On the way back to Vancouver he visited Walla Walla again and near there selected Waiilatpu as the site of a mission.<sup>78</sup> He also mingled duty and pleasure in trips up the Lewis River and across the country to Fort Colville. From Vancouver he sailed for the Sandwich Islands in the fall of 1836 and reached his home at Ithaca, New York, in May, 1837, after a journey which had lasted more than two years and in which he had visited almost every tribe of Indians dwelling near the Columbia.

**62. Whitman's Journey to Fort Hall.** — Meanwhile Dr. Marcus Whitman returned to New York in the fall of 1835 and was commissioned by the American Board to superintend the planting of a mission among the Columbia River Indians. During the following win-

<sup>78</sup>Waiilatpu was near the mouth of Mill Creek twenty-two miles from Fort Walla Walla on the north bank of the Walla Walla River. The site was in a valley covered with a rich growth of rye grass while on the surrounding hills bunch grass flourished.

ter he made his preparations. In February, 1836, he was married to Narcissa Prentiss, a woman of rare charm and great piety and devotion, who made him a faithful helpmate in his difficult work. Whitman and his wife began their journey to the west without associates, for there were not many who wished to take part in an adventure so distant and hazardous, but at Pittsburg they met the Reverend H. H. Spalding and his wife who were persuaded to join them.<sup>79</sup> At Liberty, Missouri, the party was reinforced by W. H. Gray from Utica, New York, who had been engaged as a mechanic, and joining a caravan of the American Fur Company's traders they set out for the Columbia by way of Council Bluffs and the River Platte. Like Jason Lee, Dr. Whitman had the wisdom to understand that any successful mission among the Indians must be based upon agriculture; he therefore provided himself with a plow and with seeds to begin farming as well as with an outfit of blacksmith's tools. At Liberty he added sixteen cows to his equipment for a colony, and besides horses for riding and the packsaddle, he also procured a one-horse wagon.<sup>80</sup> At Laramie

<sup>79</sup>Spalding was a recent graduate from Lane Theological Seminary and newly married. He and his wife were on the way to the Osages as missionaries when Whitman fell in with them. Perhaps the alteration of their plans did not at that time seem very great. Everything west of the Mississippi seemed about equally remote to the easterners. Spalding was not a brilliant man but he had considerable ability. W. H. Gray was a fine young man without much education but with good natural gifts. His History of Oregon shows that he knew what was going on around him and had his own opinion of events.

<sup>80</sup>The light wagon was taken principally on Mrs. Spalding's account. Her health suffered from the hardships of the journey and she was

the goods were transferred to pack horses and all the wagons left behind except the light vehicle which was necessary for Mrs. Spalding's comfort. When the party reached the rendezvous at Green River the Indians, who were there in large numbers, gave them a grand reception with a military exhibition in war paint and feathers. Here also they met Wyeth, who was returning to the east after the final failure of his enterprise and the sale of his property to the Hudson Bay Company.

**63. From Fort Hall to Vancouver.**—From Green River the route ran to Fort Hall on the Lewis through a country which wheeled vehicles had never yet traversed. The trappers advised Whitman that his light wagon could not get through to the Fort, but with characteristic persistence he declined to abandon it. As a matter of fact he drove the wagon not only to Fort Hall but beyond that point to Boise, though for the last stage he had to remove two of the wheels, thus reducing it to the humble estate of a cart. It is quite certain that he could have driven it through to Walla Walla had his horses been in good condition.<sup>81</sup>

not able to ride horseback. The Whitman party also had two heavy wagons which were abandoned according to custom at Laramie. Horse vehicles had been driven far beyond Laramie, even to Wind River, as early as 1829, but the road was still rough in 1836. Whitman drove the light wagon himself and got safely over the South Pass to Green River, with Mrs. Spalding.

<sup>81</sup>The famous cart was laid up at Boise and left there four years. In 1840, Joe Meek drove it across to Whitman's mission at Waiilatpu. By that time the road was pretty well broken. The difficulties of the highway through the mountains from Laramie were probably not so great as people imagined at first. There was a natural road through the South Pass.

The missionary party arrived at Fort Walla Walla on September 1, 1836, two years after Jason Lee reached the same spot, and thence, with a pause of a day or two to enjoy the hospitality of the post, they set out for Vancouver, which received them with a royal welcome on the 12th. In entertaining the wayworn missionaries, and in particular the women, Dr. McLoughlin lived up to his reputation.<sup>82</sup> Whitman negotiated with him for assistance from the Company as it might be needed, bought a supply of goods to replace those which he had been forced to abandon here and there along the route and with Spalding and Gray returned up the Columbia to begin the missions. The women were left behind for the winter at the Fort.

**64. The Missions at Waiilatpu and Lapwai.**—Whitman established the first mission at Waiilatpu, the place which Parker had chosen.<sup>83</sup> Timber being scarce, the house was built of adobes, large bricks made of clay and baked in the sun. The enthusiastic Indians lent a hand and some help was supplied from Fort Walla Walla. When this house was done another station was begun at Lapwai on the Clearwater River a dozen miles above its mouth.<sup>84</sup> Here the Spaldings

<sup>82</sup>During his stay of a few days at Vancouver, Dr. Whitman made the acquaintance of Jason Lee.

<sup>83</sup>Parker chose the site at Waiilatpu in the summer of 1836. Whitman began to build in the fall of the same year. Parker must have left some word for him at the fort or among the friendly Indians. The latter would have been delighted to take charge of a letter or convey a message by word of mouth. They were vastly pleased to have the missionaries come among them.

<sup>84</sup>It seems that Lapwai was also selected by Parker. It was only a little way from the point where Lewis and Clark took to the water on their trip westward. It was about one hundred and twenty miles east of Waiilatpu in the heart of the Nez Perce country.



were stationed while Dr. Whitman and his wife took up the mission work at Waiilatpu. In the spring of 1837 he planted an acre of potatoes and twelve acres of corn, together with peas and barley. The land was fertile, as Parker had foreseen, and the crops flourished. Induced by Whitman's success the surrounding Indians, who were far superior to the valley tribes both in vigor and intelligence, soon began to open small farms and raise supplies for themselves. Cattle obtained from the east multiplied rapidly and became so numerous in a few years that the Indians began to own herds. They were interested in the schools which the missionaries opened. Religion seems to have been exceedingly attractive to them, at least in theory, and in course of time some of them were taken into the church.

**65. Progress of the Missions.**—Whitman and his associates spared no pains to make the Indians self-supporting and to teach them to lead settled lives. Besides holding religious services and opening schools they taught the wild savages how to till their fields, built rude mills to grind their grain, and on a little press, sent from the Sandwich Islands by the missionaries there, Whitman printed portions of the Bible which he and his fellow-workers had translated into the Indian tongue. In the spring of 1837, Gray was sent east to procure reinforcements for the mission. Successful in his errand he returned in the fall of 1838 with a party of seven persons besides himself and wife. A new station was then occupied in the Spokane country farther north than Waiilatpu. The American Board missions now seemed to be firmly planted.

They had begun with brilliant prospects and the savages had welcomed them with enthusiasm. The missionaries, particularly the women, had many hardships to endure and their lives were lonely, but they enjoyed the consolations of work well done and occasionally they met together at Waiilatpu for worship and society as well as business.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup>For a time at least the Whitman missions reached the Indians much more successfully than did the Methodists in the valley of the Willamette, but Waiilatpu never became a center of American colonization like Salem. To Whitman belongs the credit of introducing irrigation in the country around Walla Walla. It may be that history will give him more praise for this in the long run than for any of his other deeds, numerous and meritorious as they were. The people who came with Gray and his wife were Cushing Eels, Elkanah Walker and A. B. Smith with their wives and M. C. Rogers. Eels, Walker and Smith were ministers.

## CHAPTER IX

### AGITATION FOR A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

**66. Senator Linn's Efforts for Oregon.**—From the year 1837 the thread of Oregon affairs becomes interwoven more and more completely in the great web of national history. As we have seen, W. A. Slacum, the government agent who had been sent by President Jackson to investigate the condition of the settlers in Oregon, set sail for the east in February, 1837. In December of the same year his careful and full report was laid before Congress. It aroused an interest in Oregon which never afterward slumbered and moved a few far-sighted leaders, principally Dr. Lewis F. Linn, senator from Missouri, to take immediate action looking toward the occupation of that important territory by the United States.<sup>86</sup> In January, 1838, Linn introduced a bill to establish a territorial government in Oregon. Congress did not pass the bill, partly from indifference to the subject, but chiefly because Linn treated the claims of Great Britain with a levity which might have led to trouble. But he was not discouraged. In the following June he presented to Congress a lengthy report upon Oregon which recounted the history of the region, told what was then known of its climate and resources, and gave it a romantic interest by describing

<sup>86</sup>Gallatin renewed the treaty of the joint occupation in 1837 for ten years more. Then the Oregon question slumbered in Congress until Slacum's report came in. Doubtless the approaching expiration of the treaty was one cause of the newly aroused interest in 1838.

the Oregon Trail over which the Whitman party had passed two years before with the missionary women. Linn's report was scattered broadcast throughout the country and became a textbook for the pioneers who soon began to throng the highway across the plains.<sup>87</sup>

**67. Lee Seeks Aid in the East for his Missions.—** While the reports of Slacum and Linn were thus turning the attention of the country forcibly to Oregon, Jason Lee arrived from his mission field to fan the flame to fervent heat. By this time the great mind of the missionary statesman had conceived a definite plan to conquer Oregon for the Union by establishing stations at strategic points from the Umpqua to Puget Sound and from Astoria to The Dalles. Daniel Lee actually opened a mission at The Dalles in the spring of 1838,<sup>88</sup> but clearly the resources of the colony were too slender to carry out the broad enterprise which had been planned and it was decided that Jason Lee should return to the east to solicit men and money from the faithful.

**68. Lee's Further Purpose. His Wife's Death.—** Lee went with another purpose also, which was to urge Congress to establish a territorial government in Oregon. Before he left the Willamette Valley a convention was called and a memorial to Congress prepared which was entrusted to his care. It described

<sup>87</sup>Schafer says that copies of this report were among the "very few books taken across the plains."

<sup>88</sup>The Dalles mission started out with a deceptive promise of success. There is a story that on one occasion eight hundred Indians were converted. Perhaps a few of the degraded, diseased and thievish tribe were actually benefited.

the delightful climate and overflowing resources of Oregon, set forth the prospects of trade with the Sandwich Islands and China, dwelt upon the ambition of the settlers to found a commonwealth and narrated the inconveniences which they suffered from the absence of government and laws. All the men at the mission signed the memorial. Ewing Young and ten other colonists also signed it as well as nine of the French Canadians.<sup>89</sup> Bearing the memorial with him, Jason Lee left for the east at the end of March, 1838, going by way of Vancouver, The Dalles, Walla Walla and Fort Hall.<sup>90</sup> He left his wife, who had come from the east to marry him the year before, at Salem. As he sped across the mountains and traversed the sandy stretches of the trail beside the shallow Platte in the wilderness, the Angel of Death entered the home he had left to serve his country and his God. At the Pawnee mission not far from Council Bluffs, a message which McLoughlin had sent across the continent overtook him, and alone in his chamber Jason Lee read the letter which told him his wife was dead.<sup>91</sup> She was

<sup>89</sup>Ewing Young had cleared his reputation of all stain and had become a leading man in the colony. The French Canadians had been won over by the predominating influence of Jason Lee, who was as much a master of men as McLoughlin himself. Young's irreconcilable hostility to the Hudson Bay Company began to produce important results in this memorial.

<sup>90</sup>McLoughlin left Vancouver for England about the same time. When he returned he brought his son with him. At Walla Walla Lee visited Whitman. They had met before at Vancouver the fall Whitman arrived.

<sup>91</sup>Mrs. Dye describes stage by stage the pathetic progress of McLoughlin's letter until it overtook Lee at the Pawnee mission. The student will follow the story with emotion.

buried under the fir trees in the land of promise where she died, while he went bravely forward upon his errand.

**69. The Peoria Party of Emigrants.**—As soon as Lee crossed the Mississippi, he began to lecture to large audiences in the churches describing the attractions of Oregon for the settler and asking for subscriptions to the missionary cause. At Peoria, Illinois, one of the two Indians who had accompanied him fell sick and was left there through the winter of 1838-9.<sup>92</sup> His tales of the salmon in the Columbia added to the interest which Lee had already excited, and, in the spring of 1839, Thomas J. Farnham with a party of fourteen men left Peoria to make the overland journey to Oregon, where they hoped to engage in business. Most of the party dropped away during the trip, so when Farnham reached Wailatpu he had but three companions.<sup>93</sup> Farnham visited Daniel Lee, who was by that time established in his mission at The Dalles, tarried for a while at Vancouver, saw the mission at Salem, and then returned to the east carrying a second memorial from the pioneers asking the United States to extend its protection and laws over Oregon.

<sup>92</sup>P. L. Edwards, who went out with Jason Lee in 1834, returned with him at this time. Edwards went with Ewing Young to California to buy cattle in 1837 and suffered great hardships. A man named F. Y. Ewing and two Chinook boys also accompanied Lee.

<sup>93</sup>Four others of Farnham's Peoria party, Holman, Cooke, Fletcher and Kilborne, reached Vancouver in May, 1840, on the same day as the passengers from the "Lausanne." They had traveled leisurely and wintered in the Rocky Mountains. Their appearance was naturally unkempt. Mrs. Dye describes the party as "four ragged boys." All of Farnham's party seem to have been young men.



**70. Lee's Memorial. Cushing's Report.**—The memorial which had been entrusted to Jason Lee was presented to Congress in January, 1839, by Senator Linn, the staunch friend of Oregon. It drew the attention of Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts who forthwith wrote to Lee for further information about the Columbia country. Lee replied, January 17, 1839, that with the reinforcement he was about to take to Oregon the population of the mission would rise to seventy persons, that there were already forty-five white men settled in the country with Indian wives and that some twenty more would go overland from the west in the spring. If the government would take measures to secure the rights of settlers, Lee thought most of the mission force as well as the other whites would remain permanently in the country. The measures needed were: first, an assured title to the land which they might take up and second, the protection of the United States government and laws. Supplied with this new information from Jason Lee, Cushing in 1839 presented a report upon Oregon to the House of Representatives. By these means, Oregon was forced gradually upon the attention of the national legislature. The government became impressed with the value of the territory, and the purpose to make it a part of the Union grew into shape.

**71. The Lausanne Party.**—Meanwhile, all through the winter and summer of the year 1839, Jason Lee labored unremittingly to raise men and money for the Willamette mission. The response was marvelous for the times. A sum of forty-two thousand dollars was subscribed, while thirty-six adult persons with sixteen



children volunteered to return with him to Oregon. They shipped on the *Lausanne* at New York on October 10, 1839, and sailed for Oregon with an adequate outfit of supplies for the colony. They passed around the Horn in safety, touched at Hawaii and landed at Vancouver on the first of June, 1840.

**72. Lee's Assignments.**—Following out his noble scheme of founding a state by planting missions, Jason Lee stationed his reinforcements at various strategic points. J. H. Frost went to the pining settlement at the mouth of the Columbia, A. F. Waller to Willamette Falls, and J. P. Richmond to Fort Nesqually on Puget Sound. W. W. Cone and Gustavus Hines were sent to the Umpqua, but the mission which they began did not succeed. Brewer and Babcock were added to the forces at The Dalles. The other members of the party on the *Lausanne* joined the colony at Salem. At about this time some of the Rocky Mountain trappers also located not far from Salem, thus adding a new and strong American tendency to the forces at work in the colony.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup>The colony now contained a hundred whites, or more. They had grown restless under the overshadowing power of the Hudson Bay Company and would have desired closer relations with Washington purely from sentiments of patriotism even if they had suffered no inconveniences. The Company had treated them fairly, sometimes generously, but as Americans they naturally wished to live under their own government. The mountain trappers sought the settlement because the dissolution of the American Fur Company in 1840 had thrown them out of employment. Some interesting items pertaining to the settlement of the valley may be collected in this note better than elsewhere. In 1838 the Jesuits, Blanchet and Demers, began their missions among the Indians. Blanchet located among the Canadians on French Prairie and did a good work. In

**73. Expedition of Lieutenant Wilkes.**—The year 1838, as the student will have noticed, was remarkable for agitation of the Oregon question from many different sources. It was sufficient to stimulate the government at Washington to send out a fleet, named the Pacific Exploring Expedition, under Lieutenant Charles Wilkes with instructions to report upon the country. Wilkes traveled faithfully through the Willamette Valley and kept an account of what he saw and did. At Sauvie's Island he found Joseph Gale and his companions engaged in building "The Star of Oregon" and much hampered by lack of material, such as spikes and ropes,

1839 the North Litchfield Association of Connecticut, Presbyterian, fitted out two missionaries, J. S. Griffin and Ashabel Munger. Griffin settled on Tualatin Plains after wintering at Lapwai. In the year 1839 Captain John Couch of the brig "Maryland" took up a land claim in North Portland and E. O. Hall brought the printing press from Hawaii to the Whitman mission. This press ended its career at Oregon City. The "Oregon Spectator," begun in 1846, was printed on it. In September, 1840, another party of Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Oregon and settled on Tualatin Plains. They came from Quincy, Illinois. Their names were Harvey Clark, A. T. Smith and P. B. Littlejohn, each with his wife. Littlejohn went east in 1845, but the other two remained and became leading citizens. On his way to Oregon, Smith made a loom for Mrs. Spalding at Lapwai and helped build a gristmill there. In 1841 he took up a claim in Washington County and lived there the rest of his life. S. A. Clark visited him there in 1885 and took down his story. The arrival of immigrants from so many different parts of the country shows that the efforts of Hall J. Kelley, Jason Lee and others had awakened a wide interest in Oregon. The Frenchman, Mofras, who visited Oregon in 1841-2, found in the entire Columbia country two hundred Americans, and one hundred Englishmen, the latter in the service of the Hudson Bay Company. There were also three hundred French Canadians of whom one hundred were in the service of the Company. In the fall of 1842 Dr. White's party arrived, largely increasing the number of Americans.

with which Dr. McLoughlin had hesitated to supply them. He rather suspected that they might turn out to be pirates. Wilkes ascertained their good intentions and induced McLoughlin to sell them what they needed.<sup>95</sup> At French Prairie, where he dined with the good Father Blanchet, Wilkes found the Canadians living an idyllic life on their comfortable farms. Passing a few other farms belonging to scattering settlers, Wilkes came to the old mission<sup>96</sup> where Mr. Abernethy and three other men were living with their families in the hospital built by Dr. Elijah White. Thence he went on to Salem, talking with the settlers and inspecting the missionary work. At Oregon City, where he talked with the Methodist missionary, Waller, Wilkes heard a great deal about the tyranny and exactions of the Hudson Bay Company, and in general among the settlers he learned of a desire for a provisional government to rule the country until it should be formally taken over by the United States. But with this aspiration Wilkes felt little sympathy. In his opinion the Americans were not yet numerous enough to establish a government, and he saw no reason why they should be displeased with the Company which had aided them in many ways, sold them large supplies of goods on credit, protected them from the Indians and furnished them a market for their prod-

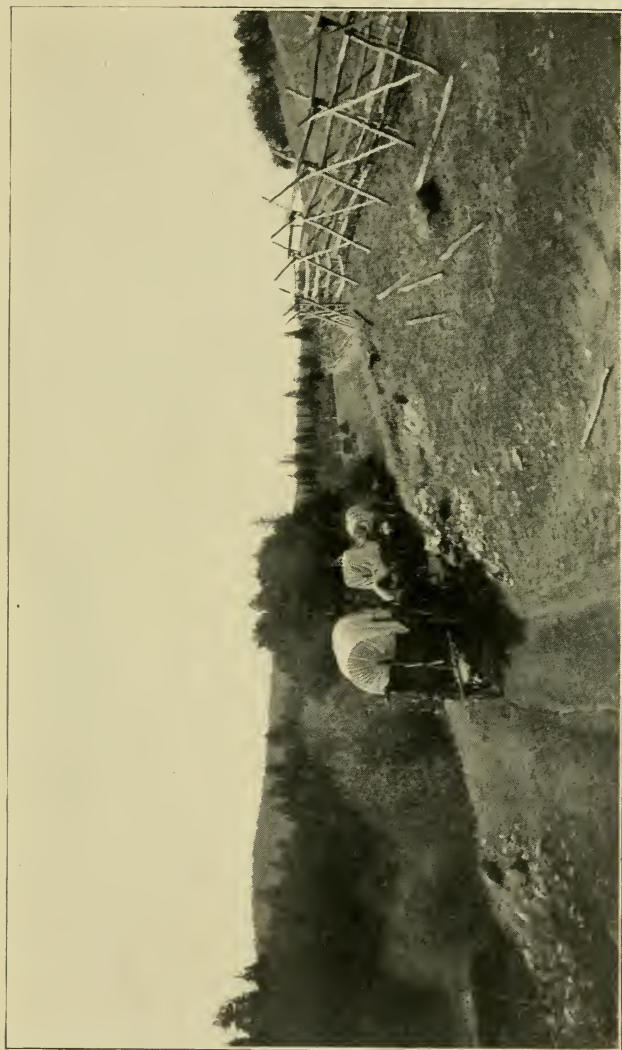
<sup>95</sup>What they actually did was to sail to California and trade the ship for cattle. They said they were going to leave Oregon because there were no white women for wives, but most of them came back with the cattle.

<sup>96</sup>In the spring of his return in the "Lausanne" Jason Lee removed the mission to Chemeketa, that is, Salem.

uce. In conversation with the settlers Wilkes discouraged the project of forming a provisional government and in his report when he returned east he spoke slightly of their reasons for discontent with actual conditions. Naturally Lieutenant Wilkes did not please the settlers by his opinions and comments.<sup>97</sup> He sailed for California on October 5, 1841.

**74. Death of Ewing Young.**—In the winter of 1841–2 the undaunted pioneer, Ewing Young, died in the prime of life leaving a considerable estate with no heirs present in Oregon to claim it. How to dispose of this property was a question which interested the settlers from its very nature while it also emphasized their lack of laws and a regular government. At Young's funeral a call was issued for a general meeting on February 17, 1841, ostensibly to deliberate upon the disposal of his estate, but when the meeting convened, with Jason Lee in the chair and Gustavus Hines for secretary, it resolved to elect a committee to draft a constitution and code of laws. On the next day, February 18, David Leslie

<sup>97</sup>He was severe upon the mission people for leaving their new farm machinery out in the winter rains. This habit has not yet entirely disappeared in Oregon. Sir George Simpson, governor of the Hudson Bay Company, and Duflot de Mofras, from the French legation in Mexico, also visited Oregon in 1841. Wilkes estimated sixty white families and ten thousand cattle in the Willamette Valley. Probably he was mistaken about the number of the cattle. Holman, in his *Life of McLoughlin*, says fresh beef was scarce at Vancouver in 1841. If there were only three thousand cattle, each family, including the Canadians, would have had some twenty-four head and beef would not have been scarce among the settlers. In 1841 there were thirty-five thousand bushels of wheat raised in the Willamette Valley according to Simpson. Of course there were other crops in proportion. Hogs were very numerous.



THE DAYS OF OLD





was made chairman. It seems that Lee retired in order to conciliate the French colonists who might have been jealous of him as the superintendent of the Methodist missions. The committee was then selected<sup>98</sup> with Father Blanchet at its head, and Dr. Ira L. Babcock of the Methodist mission was appointed supreme judge with probate powers. He was instructed to follow the laws of New York until the proposed code should be compiled, and, to give the committee time for this work, the convention adjourned till the 7th of June. It is thus clear that the settlers went far beyond the ostensible purpose of their meeting, and took decided steps toward establishing a government for themselves.

**75. The Provisional Government in Abeyance.**—Dr. Babcock appointed an administrator for Ewing Young's intestate property on April 17,<sup>99</sup> but when the colonists reconvened on June 7th, they found that nothing had been done toward compiling a constitution and code. In fact Father Blanchet, partly under Dr. McLoughlin's influence, believed that the time had not yet come when the settlers needed a government with formal laws. He laid much stress on the interesting fact that so far

<sup>98</sup>Besides Blanchet, the committeemen were Jason Lee, David Donpierre, Gustavus Hines, Robert Moore, J. L. Parrish, Etienne Lucier, William Johnson and a Canadian named Charlevon. The names show that the French and American elements were about equally represented.

<sup>99</sup>Curiously enough, although there had as yet been no crime in the colony, the proceeds of Ewing Young's estate were applied to build a jail in Oregon City. Some twenty years later Ewing's son Joaquin made claim to the property and the legislature restored its value to him



the settlement had been almost free from crime. Accordingly Blanchet very properly withdrew from the chairmanship, and W. J. Bailey was chosen in his place. The meeting then adjourned to the first Thursday in October, but before that date the opposition of Lieutenant Wilkes, previously mentioned, had so dampened the ardor of the colonists that the project was dropped for the time, at least publicly. The private agitation of course continued ceaselessly, for it is not consistent with the nature of Americans to live without a constitution and laws.

## CHAPTER X

### THE EMIGRATION OF 1842

**76. White Appointed Indian Agent.**—In his letter to Representative Caleb Cushing of Massachusetts, January 17, 1839, Jason Lee had urged that the United States should designate some person to act as magistrate and governor in Oregon. This recommendation was not forgotten by those in the east who had the interests of Oregon at heart and in 1842, through the efforts of Senator Linn and others, the government was moved to send out an Indian agent. Since the conflicting claims of Great Britain had not yet been adjusted it would not have been seemly to complicate the question by appointing a governor.<sup>100</sup> For this humble office Dr. Elijah White was selected.<sup>101</sup> Besides his formal commission as Indian agent he received vague oral directions to act as a sort of magistrate among the whites and was urged by the government to take with him to the coast as many emigrants as he could collect.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>100</sup>In the summer of 1842 Daniel Webster and Lord Ashburton were discussing the matters at issue between the United States and Great Britain, and in August they signed the so-called Ashburton Treaty. The Oregon question was somewhat dwelt upon between them but, to the great disappointment of the westerners, it was not settled. Great Britain still clung to the Columbia as her southern boundary, while Webster had set his heart upon the forty-ninth parallel.

<sup>101</sup>After his difference with Jason Lee in 1840, White returned east by sea and had since been living at his home in Lansing.

<sup>102</sup>It thus appears that Washington was moving unerringly, if somewhat gradually, toward the assimilation of Oregon. By this time it was pretty well admitted on all sides that the United States would hold the territory south of the Columbia.

**77. White's Party of Emigrants.**—There was already a lively interest in Oregon among the bold spirits of the west, and White by his lectures and talks with adventurous young men had no difficulty in collecting the largest band of emigrants which had thus far ever crossed the plains to the coast. He left Independence on May 16, 1842, with about one hundred and twenty persons under his charge, of whom fifty-two were men over eighteen years of age. This was a formidable reinforcement to the American colonists in Oregon. Since the American Fur Company had now dissolved and its caravans were no longer at the service of the emigrants, White's party had to rely upon its own resources. To meet the necessities of the case, they adopted regulations for the journey which were substantially the same as those followed by the great emigration of 1843, and those who crossed the plains in subsequent years. A captain was elected, a pilot or guide appointed, and rules adopted for the march by day and the encampment by night. Camp was pitched at four o'clock, when wood and water were at hand. The wagons were drawn up in a circle which served both as a fortification and a pen for the horses and cattle. At sunset the stock, which had been turned out to graze, was brought within the ring of wagons<sup>103</sup> and tethered. The families prepared their meals separately but after nightfall they met in social converse enlivening the time with<sup>104</sup> singing and inno-

<sup>103</sup>The party had eighteen large Pennsylvania wagons drawn by oxen, besides many mules and horses as well as cows.

<sup>104</sup>Schafer describes from original sources the working of a similar code in the emigration of 1843. White's party got along fairly well though not entirely without dissension. The interesting fact is that their rules brought them safely to their destination.

cent amusements, and for sleep the women and children retired to the covered wagons while the men bivouacked on the ground under tents. Following the Oregon Trail, White's party reached Fort Laramie June 23, where they rested a week and procured supplies at exorbitant prices.<sup>105</sup> Here also many of the emigrants, taking bad advice, sold their oxen and wagons, receiving goods or horses in exchange. Those who kept their wagons drove them through to Fort Hall without serious difficulty and might have driven them farther, but at this place the goods were transferred to pack horses, and it was left to the emigrants of 1843 to go through to the Columbia with wagons for the first time. From Fort Hall, White traveled faster than his companions. He made his way rapidly to Vancouver, visiting Whitman as he passed Waiilatpu. The main body, which followed in two divisions, also enjoyed Whitman's hospitality when they reached his station. The last of them passed Walla Walla about the middle of September, a week or two before the energetic doctor received the news from the east which caused him to set out upon his famous winter ride. White reached Vancouver September 20, 1842, and on September 23d, addressed a meeting of the settlers at Champoege, where he recounted the purpose of his appointment and spoke of the intention of the government to foster the colony. The members of his party sought work here and there throughout the settlements in the

<sup>105</sup>Flour was a dollar a pint and coffee and sugar a dollar a pound. The next year members of the big emigration complained because Dr. Whitman charged them a dollar a bushel for wheat.

Valley. McLoughlin, ever thoughtful and generous, hired some of them at fair wages. Others were employed at Oregon City by the Methodist Mission which was making improvements there.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>106</sup>Probably most of the men with families settled at Oregon City. During the winter of 1842-3 the number of buildings at that place increased from three or four to thirty.

## CHAPTER XI

### PROGRESS OF THE WHITMAN MISSIONS

**78. Whitman's Discouragements.**—Toward the end of September, 1842, not long after White's party passed Waiilatpu, Dr. Whitman received orders from the American Board to discontinue the mission at that place and also the one at Lapwai where Spalding was laboring. It appears that many discouragements had beset the work at these stations. The first enthusiasm of the savages for Christian instruction had speedily given way to childish petulance. Sometimes they were submissive to the missionaries, sometimes impudently hostile. The country under intelligent cultivation turned out to be exceedingly fertile and large crops were raised both at Waiilatpu and Lapwai. Some of the Indians also planted fields, but their labors were fitful and inconstant. Since 1840 Whitman had received little or no encouragement from the American Board. Reinforcements had not arrived to cheer and aid him. Even the few helpers whom he secured at one time and another were likely to desert him.<sup>107</sup> In the spring of 1840 the Jesuit Father Demers began a brilliantly successful mission among the Indians in Whitman's vicinity, which was liberally supported with men and money from Europe. This created religious divisions among the savages, as a mat-

<sup>107</sup>W. H. Gray, for instance, one of his original party, left for the valley in 1842 to superintend the construction of the Oregon Institute.

ter of course, and added much to Whitman's difficulties. He also had to contend with the evil influence of certain depraved whites who roamed lawlessly among the savages sowing discord. The air was full of discouragement, perhaps of peril, for nobody could predict what the fickle and wayward Indians might do at any moment. Finally toward the end of September came the order from the east to close the missions. A man less determined than Whitman and less consecrated to his ideal would have given up in despair.

**79. Whitman's Winter Journey.**—A meeting of the missionaries associated with Whitman was called forthwith to consider the order of the American Board. They agreed that the missions at Waiilatpu and Lapwai ought not to be abandoned, and at his request gave him permission to visit the east and lay the subject before the Board. McKinley, the Hudson Bay Company's agent at Fort Walla Walla, advised him that it was not then too late in the season to make the journey by way of Santa Fé. His natural courage and impetuosity urged him to attempt it. Hastily arranging his affairs for a long absence,<sup>108</sup> he set out on October 3, 1842, for Fort Hall, accompanied only by a guide and by A. L. Lovejoy, a belated member of Dr. Elijah White's party, who by a fortunate coincidence was still at Waiilatpu and was persuaded by Whitman to join in his almost desperate adventure. When they reached Fort Hall it seems that there was still time to cross the mountains by the usual emigrant trail, and

<sup>108</sup>Whitman confided his wife to McKinley's care and invited two of his friends to spend the year of his absence with her.



Whitman would have taken that route had he not received warnings of hostile Indians. This together with the information he had received from McKinley induced him to turn southward over the much longer trail by way of Taos and Bent's Fort. In this section of the journey the travelers were overtaken by terrible storms. The pitiless cold of the mountains tormented them and hunger brought them to the verge of death. Still they persevered. Whitman's indomitable will animating his iron frame triumphed over all obstacles and the two hardy travelers finally reached Bent's Fort in safety. This was in January, 1843. Lovejoy remained at the fort until the following summer when he returned northward in time to join the great emigration at Fort Hall.<sup>109</sup>

**80. Whitman in the East.**—Whitman pushed on without delay to the east by way of St. Louis and made his appearance, dressed in his pioneering garb of furs and buckskins, both in Boston and Washington. In the former city he pleaded with the American Board to rescind their order of abandonment and renew their support of the missions at Waiilatpu and Lapwai, but he pleaded in vain, except that he extorted permission to labor with the Indians if he desired at his own expense. With this cold comfort from the obdurate board, he went to Washington where he

<sup>109</sup>Lovejoy reached Oregon with the emigrants and settled first at Oregon City as McLoughlin's business agent. In the winter of 1843 he purchased the site of Portland in partnership with F. W. Pettygrove. The first house in Portland was built at the corner of Front and Washington streets in 1844, and the town was laid out in 1845. Lovejoy, who was originally from Boston, died in 1882.

renewed the recommendations so often made to the government before, and from so many different sources, to establish a line of forts along the Oregon Trail for the protection and sustenance of emigrants. Undeterred by his chill reception in the east, Whitman turned his face toward Oregon again in the spring of 1843 with his zeal still burning brightly, and by the 18th of May was at Independence ready to join the assembled emigrants.<sup>110</sup>

**81. Indian Troubles at Waiilatpu.**—Among the Cayuses in the vicinity of Waiilatpu a conviction had gradually taken shape that the whites would sooner or later deprive them of their land. The arrival of Dr. White's party of emigrants, in the fall of 1842, seemed to confirm the unfortunate belief and when Whitman soon afterward left for the east the Indians took it for granted that he would return with a band of settlers who would occupy the territory near Waiilatpu. This naturally increased their hostility to the missionaries, and Whitman had not been long away when the ungrateful savages burned one of his mills. As soon as White received the news of the outrage he proceeded to the country of the Cayuses, and, in his capacity of Indian Agent for the government, succeeded in bringing the chiefs into a council at Lapwai where he cajoled them in the ineffectual manner which at that time was

<sup>110</sup>His outfit for the journey across the mountains was slender. It is reported that he had no provisions but a boiled ham, expecting to shoot game enough to eat. He seems to have been disappointed in this particular and the other emigrants had to feed him. Daniel Waldo, for instance, relieved his wants more than once.

supposed to be wise, and induced them to adopt a code of laws by which penalties were provided for murder, arson, theft, and the other crimes most common among them. Under White's persuasion they also elected a head chief with rather wide executive authority. The laws made a pretty appearance on paper, but to the savage mind they carried a meaning entirely different from White's and in the sequence they did more harm than good inasmuch as they were made to justify insolent trickery.<sup>111</sup> But White succeeded in restoring some sort of peace between the savages and the missions so that crops were raised in the summer of 1843 and supplies were for sale at Waiilatpu when the famished emigrants arrived in the fall. Thus White, on behalf of the United States, exercised some real influence over the Indians, while he tried without much success to assume a certain vague authority over the colonists.

<sup>111</sup>Kipling's phrase "half devil and half child" applies with singular force to these savages about Waiilatpu. They were friendly one day and hostile the next without apparent cause. They lied, stole and murdered almost at the very moment when they were praying most fervently. They wanted pay for cultivating their own fields. Some of them even demanded pay for saying their prayers. When the emigrants of 1843 came through, these Indians would steal their horses at night and demand a shirt the next morning for restoring them. Altogether they were a hopeless tribe.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

82. **Agitation for a Provisional Government.**—The colonists desired a more formal and stable government than Dr. White could offer them. In the fall of 1842 they again made overtures to the Canadians to assist in establishing some provisional arrangement, and met with another rebuff through the influence of Dr. McLoughlin and Father Blanchet. The former very properly deemed that his loyalty was due to Great Britain. The latter, speaking for the Frenchmen, declared in substance that a provisional government would bring more inconvenience than benefit. He refused to pay taxes and asserted that a militia would simply breed trouble between the whites and Indians, while the more laws they had in the colony the more roguery would thrive.<sup>112</sup> But there was no lull in the agitation. It was kept up through the winter of 1842-3. The ravages of wild beasts among the horses and cattle perpetually stimulated it, and on February 2, 1843, a number of settlers who had gathered more or less formally at the Oregon Institute issued a call for a general meeting which convened on the second Monday in March.<sup>113</sup> The ostensible purpose was to

<sup>112</sup>Father Blanchet agreed very well with some modern theorists like Tolstoi. It is interesting to hear these opinions from the lips of a man of education who was then living in the conditions which the absence of the law produces.

<sup>113</sup>From the purpose for which it was called this is known as the "Wolf Meeting."

devise some sort of protection against wild animals, which was effected by offering bounties for the slaughter of wolves, lynxes, bears and panthers. This completed the business of the first day.

**83. Organization of the Provisional Government.**—On the second day the settlers took up a much more important matter. They appointed a committee of twelve men to consider the propriety of “taking steps for the civil and military protection of the colony.” Some of the colonists were more interested in this than in the destruction of the wild beasts, and they naturally seized the opportunity to forward their purpose. The agitation for a provisional government was steadily carried on, some favorable sentiment was aroused even among the Canadians, and when the time seemed to be ripe for action the committee called a mass meeting at Champoege on May 2, 1843. The colonists duly assembled and listened to the committee’s report in favor of establishing a government, but the motion to adopt it hung in doubt for some time and might have been lost had it not been for the bold initiative of Joe Meek, a stalwart and picturesque mountain man, who marched to the right where the party for the organization was to stand in dividing, and called upon those who favored the report to follow him. His courage decided the issue. The factions consumed an hour in dividing, but when the votes were counted there were fifty-two for the provisional government and only fifty against it.

**84. The First Organic Law.**—The opposing faction then withdrew and those who remained proceeded to elect officers under the new government. They chose

a supreme judge, a clerk and recorder, three magistrates, three constables, a major and three captains of militia, and naturally Joe Meek was made high sheriff. Before adjourning the colonists appointed a legislative committee to draft a code of laws and report to the people on July 5, 1843.<sup>114</sup> The settlers assembled at Champoege on July 4, and listened to an eloquent oration by the Reverend Gustavus Hines in honor of the occasion. Early the next morning the meeting was called to order and the code recommended by the committee, the "First Organic Law" of Oregon, was adopted. It was largely modeled on the laws of Iowa which were declared to be the "laws of this territory in civil, military and criminal cases where not otherwise provided for." The report speaks of the country as "Oregon territory" which for the purposes of "temporary government" was divided into four districts. Following the terms of the report, the pioneers then proceeded to adopt, as "free citizens of this territory," certain "articles of compact," "for the purpose of fixing the principles of civil and religious liberty as the basis of all laws and constitutions of government that may hereafter be adopted."<sup>115</sup> This fundamental com-

<sup>114</sup>This committee was paid at the rate of a dollar and a quarter a day for each member, the money to be raised by subscription. Pay was allowed for six days' work only.

<sup>116</sup>Philosophers have speculated a great deal about the origin of government. A little attention to facts like those narrated above would solve the problem for them. The general course of events has been the same in every case though it has sometimes taken centuries elsewhere to accomplish what the Oregon pioneers did in a year or two. The four legislative districts were named Twality, Yamhill, Clackamas and Champoeick. The primitive orthography will not trouble the reader.



pact established religious liberty, provided for trial by jury, promised to encourage "schools and the means of education," and forbade slavery. It limited the suffrage to white males, vested the executive power in a committee of three persons and the legislative power in a committee of nine. A supreme court and probate courts were also established.<sup>116</sup> The expenses of the new government were to be defrayed by subscription, which proved to be an ineffectual expedient and soon had to be altered. But there were various factions to be conciliated and the people undoubtedly adopted the best plan that could be devised in the circumstances.<sup>117</sup> Much of this scheme of government was made to fit the list of officers who had been chosen at the meeting on May 2nd, and who were now confirmed in their positions.

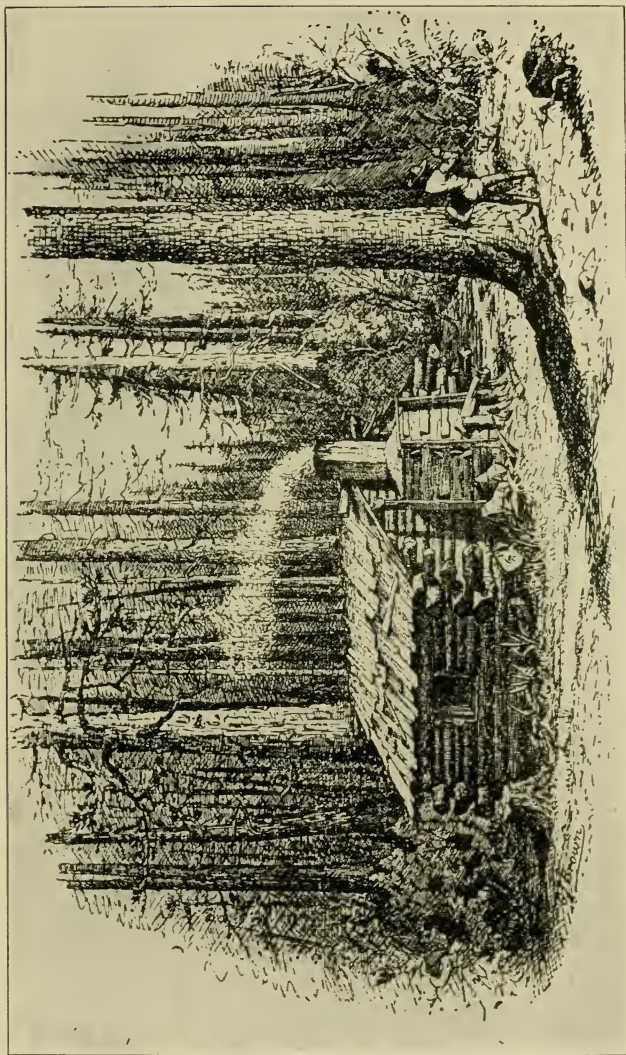
**85. The First Land Law.**—The people also adopted a law of land claims which was of more practical interest to settlers than anything else they did. Claims were limited to 640 acres, but they might be "square or oblong" in shape. This in practice came to mean any shape whatever, so that many of the old claims wound deviously along the course of streams. They

<sup>116</sup>The compact declared that the people were entitled to "proportionate representation in the legislature." Many years were to elapse before this was truly attained. The nearest the pioneers came to it was to provide for a majority representation which leaves the minority out altogether and is far from being "proportionate."

<sup>117</sup>The members of the executive committee were David Hill, Alanson Beers, a lay member of Lee's mission, and Joseph Gale who built the "Star of Oregon." They were not the strongest characters in the community, but, probably for that very reason, were the most available.



had to be designated by natural boundaries or corner marks and recorded in a book kept by the territorial recorder. This liberal land law was a powerful attraction to new settlers. Oregon was now provided with a government and a code of laws in readiness for the great emigration which arrived in the fall of the same year, 1843.



THE FIRST HOUSE IN PORTLAND



## CHAPTER XIII

### THE EMIGRATION OF 1843

**86. Causes of the Emigration.**—While the colonists were framing the First Organic Law of Oregon at Champoege the great emigration was moving slowly across the plains. In the spring of 1843 there seemed to be a general understanding throughout Missouri and the neighboring states that a large party would start for Oregon as soon as the season opened. The causes which had excited the migratory impulse were numerous and complicated. At the bottom of it lay of course the economic motive, for the story had gone far and wide that in Oregon there was free land for everybody with abundant crops and high prices. The people of the Mississippi Valley, dwelling in the heart of the continent without railroads and with no seaport but remote New Orleans, were hard put to it to dispose of their produce and, for all their fertile soil, their farms were almost worthless in the market while corn, their great staple, was sometimes burned for fuel on the river steamers. The Willamette Valley on the other hand was near the Ocean and easily accessible to the markets of the Sandwich Islands, of Russian Alaska and the Orient.

**87. Other Motives.**—To the economic motive for the emigration we must add the powerful influence of that hatred of Great Britain which still burned in the breasts of the western pioneers. The long contest

over the Oregon country had at times almost threatened war. The westerners believed, perhaps they hoped, that it would only be settled by war, and there were eager young men who longed to be on the ground to take a hand in the fight. Nor must we forget the attraction to those bold and hardy souls of the journey itself, the long and adventurous march across the plains, hunting the buffalo, guarding against the cunning savage, fording the rivers, gazing into far-off vistas from the lofty passes of strange mountains and sleeping under the stars. Hardship itself has its charm for vigorous youth, and adventure in untried lands calls with irresistible allurements. The lectures of Jason Lee were not forgotten in which he had told of the wide Willamette Valley with its deep soil, its abundant native grasses, its perennial springs and its gentle hills rising by slow degrees on the east and the west to the fir-clad mountains. The speeches in Congress on the Oregon question had been widely read and had set many hearts throbbing with interest in the new and remote land. In the summer of 1842, Elijah White journeying westward at the head of his hundred and twenty emigrants had written back from the mountains, as Jason Lee did on his pioneer trip, that all was well with his adventurers, that they would reach the promised land in safety, and that a trusty pilot would be on hand the next spring for those who wished to follow.

**88. Gathering of the Companies.**—So as spring opened the companies which had been organizing in the winter of 1842-3 at many places in Ohio, Kentucky,

Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Missouri began to draw together at Independence. At the head of some of these little bands were men of great ability and wide influence who were willing to try their fortunes in Oregon. Of course their example was followed by many of less note.<sup>118</sup> Sometimes a whole family of brothers took the trail with their wives, their children, and their household goods loaded in wagons drawn by oxen. Sometimes the little primary party was a band of boyhood friends. Through April and the first weeks of May, 1843, they came gathering in at Independence. On May 20th, the assembly had become large enough to organize and adopt a code of rules for the overland march.<sup>119</sup> Peter H. Burnett was elected

<sup>118</sup>Peter H. Burnett of Weston, Missouri, led a large party. Jesse Applegate with his brothers, Lindsay and Charles, and Daniel Waldo brought a company from St. Clair county in the same state. These men became leaders in Oregon affairs. Jesse Applegate had fine literary gifts. His writings on the history of his day are highly valued. Bancroft has collected all the particulars of the journey. Two or three typical facts will convince the student of the vivid interest which the westerners felt in Oregon. In 1838-39 the legislature of Illinois memorialized Congress for a speedy settlement of the Oregon question and occupation of the country. In 1840, seven citizens of Elizabethtown, Kentucky, asked Congress to build a road to Astoria and plant there a government colony. The same year a petition of the same purport went in from forty citizens of Indiana. The Oregon fever was a spirit that had slowly developed. Its final outbreak was perfectly natural and needs no miraculous explanation.

<sup>119</sup>Schafer has followed the emigration with scholarly enthusiasm. His researches have brought to light much new and interesting information. Peter H. Burnett kept a diary of the trip. Jesse Applegate, "Captain of the Cow Column," described his experiences to the Pioneer Association in 1876.



captain and J. W. Nesmith orderly sergeant with nine councilmen to aid in settling difficulties.<sup>120</sup>

**89. Beginning of the Journey.**—On May 22nd, the journey began with John Gantt for guide. The weather was fine and the road good, still the conduct of a mixed company of nearly a thousand persons, some with baggage and cattle, others with few impediments, presented many difficulties and at the crossing of the Big Blue River it was divided into two sections, each of sixty wagons. Those who had few loose cattle to delay them led the van. The men encumbered with herds marched in the rear; but the two sections kept always within supporting distance of each other and at Independence Rock a new arrangement was made.<sup>121</sup> The day's routine was much the same as with Elijah White's party of the preceding year. At four o'clock in the morning activity began. Fires were kindled, the herds collected, breakfast cooked and eaten. Then the tents were struck, the circle of wagons broken up and the oxen yoked. Each section of sixty wagons was divided into fifteen platoons of four, and the leading platoon of the day before fell into the rear as the march began. At seven o'clock the trumpet sounded, the guide took his place in the van, the teamsters shouted to their oxen and the long procession moved slowly forward, forging steadily ahead until noon when

<sup>120</sup>Burnett resigned after eight days' service and William Martin took his place. Nesmith became United States senator from Oregon and his descendants are still leading figures in the state.

<sup>121</sup>For better protection against the Indians the sections were broken up into small parties. This brought congenial persons together and led to many lasting friendships.



a pause was made at a spot selected beforehand by the provident guide, and men and cattle rested and ate. At one o'clock they got under way again and plodded onward till the sun was low. Then the wagons were drawn up in a circle, the unyoked oxen were turned out to graze, each wagon was fastened to the one ahead by its chains and tongue so as to form a barrier to protect the stock and ward off hostile Indians, the supper was cooked and eaten, the evening was passed in such diversion as the pilgrimage permitted, the night watch was set and the long day ended with the deep slumber of the weary body and the free mind.

90. **From Fort Hall to the Grande Ronde.**—Thus they traveled day after day in wearisome routine through June, July and August without serious mishap, reaching Fort Hall on August 27th.<sup>122</sup> Here, as with former parties the question arose whether they should leave their wagons or not. The road was untried, their cattle were footsore, the season was late. To many it seemed best to follow the example of their predecessors and exchange their wagons for pack-horses; but Dr. Whitman advised them not to do so. He knew the way as well as anybody; he offered his services as guide to the Columbia and the emigrants finally yielding to his persuasion determined to continue the journey as they had begun.<sup>123</sup> After a few days rest at Fort Hall they again yoked their oxen to

<sup>122</sup>This was the rear of the party. The advance with Dr. Whitman reached Fort Hall somewhat sooner. Whitman had joined the emigrants at the Platte River.

<sup>123</sup>Perhaps their decision was unavoidable. There were not enough pack horses obtainable to carry their goods.

the wagons and took up the march to the Columbia over the most toilsome and difficult stretch of the journey.<sup>124</sup> Now, with the autumnal storms at hand and hunger staring them in the face, it behooved the emigrants to press forward with incessant diligence. Dr. Whitman did his most valuable service to them and earned their everlasting gratitude by pressing home the danger of loitering on this dreary desert.<sup>125</sup> They forded the Snake with all their goods by raising the wagon beds on blocks. Up the desolate canyon of the Burnt River, where the banks were obstructed by a tangle of fallen timber, they drove along the bed of the stream and upon the ridge at its head for the first time since leaving Independence, they had to dig a roadway. From that time until they reached the Grande Ronde Valley travel was everywhere difficult because of the broken country, but there was no lingering, and on October 1st, the main body of the emigrants camped in that lovely spot and rested their eyes upon its running brooks and emerald pastures encircled with mountain forests of pine. It was a veritable oasis and they would fain have stayed where nature promised so bountifully, but starvation drove them onward and pitiless winter threatened at the fore. On October 2nd, as they rose in the morning the mountain sides were white with snow.

<sup>124</sup>The emigrants of 1843 had not escaped the error of believing that when they had reached Fort Hall the journey was nearly finished. This accounts for the failure of their provisions before they came to Waiilatpu.

<sup>125</sup>Much of the dreary desert now bears luxuriant orchards or waves with verdant alfalfa, all because of irrigation.

91. From the Grande Ronde to the Willamette Valley.—Between the Grande Ronde Valley and the plains of the Umatilla towered the giant ridge of the Blue Mountains covered with heavy timber through which a road must be cut for the wagons. None had ever gone that way before. Forty stalwart pioneers swung their axes in the primeval forest to clear the way, and ever onward in their rear the heavy wagons, with the household goods and the women and children, toiled.<sup>126</sup> Five days sufficed for the passage of the Blue Mountains and brought the emigrants in sight of the plains of the Umatilla, where the wide horizon stretched away to Waiilatpu. On October 10, 1843, they camped within three miles of Waiilatpu, Whitman's mission, and replenished their failing provisions from the fields and gardens which he in his zeal had planted. Between Walla Walla and Vancouver the emigrants met their severest trials. Some who left their cattle to winter at the mission almost perished of hunger. Some were imperiled in the Columbia at the Cascades and The Dalles as they tried to pass the rapids on frail rafts. All were subjected to the rains of autumn and the bitter cold of the mountains. But most of the stock was ferried across at The Dalles, driven to Vancouver and then brought back. Wagons, goods and families were transported by water and, before the end of November the emigrants were safe in the Willamette

<sup>126</sup>J. W. Nesmith carried an axe all the way through the Blue Mountains and was loved by everybody for his steady strength of body and character. He had a singular power to make friends, and what is better keep them. The Applegates were among the choppers and so was Burnett.

Valley, where they found a civilized government and code of laws ready to guide their efforts in building a state.

**92. The First Winter in Oregon.**—The selection of land claims was generally put off till spring on account of bad weather. Those who had means procured supplies from the Hudson Bay Company. Those who had no means went to work. Oregon City was a favorite resort during the winter of 1843-4. Here there was a better social life than elsewhere in the valley. There was also work to be had, and the newcomers showed that the journey had not impaired their mental vigor by founding a circulating library with the books they had brought across the continent. This influx of almost a thousand Americans decided the question of the ownership of Oregon and largely determined the future of the state. The leaders of the emigrants became the leaders in social and political life and held their preëminence for many years.

## CHAPTER XIV

### UNDER THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

**93. Close of Jason Lee's Career.**—Of the settlers who reached Oregon in the fall of 1843, not all were friendly to the Methodist missions. Many believed that the mission at Salem under the direction of Jason Lee had unwisely diverted its labors from the Indians to the white colonists and in particular there was complaint that it held too much land. Disquieted by this sentiment, which he knew to be prevalent among the settlers, and by reports which had reached him that damaging accounts of his conduct had been laid before the Methodist Missionary Society, Jason Lee resolved to make another journey to the east. On February 3, 1844, he left Oregon for the last time, sailing by way of the Sandwich Islands, to plead with the government for the security of the mission lands and with the Missionary Society for his own good name. In the latter purpose he had been forestalled by his enemies, for his successor as Superintendent of the Mission was already on the way to Oregon when Lee sailed. At Washington he conversed with the President and a number of eminent men who reassured him concerning the safety of the mission claim, though they could promise him nothing definite. His defense before the Missionary Society did not lead to his restoration as Superintendent. Disappointed, he retired to Stanstead, the little town at the head of Lake Memphremagog, where he was born, and there on March 12, 1845,

he died. His services to Oregon were very great. Besides actually planting the first colony in the Willamette Valley his powerful mind stamped a religious and literary character upon Oregon life which persists to this day. The interesting fact that crime was almost unknown in the Willamette Valley for several years may be ascribed largely to the excellent influence of the missionaries. The permanent side of his work was mental and spiritual. Its outward achievements were soon swept away or greatly changed. His manual labor school was sold to the Oregon Institute which was removed to Salem in 1844, and in June of that year his successor, the Rev. George Gary, dissolved the old mission and sold its buildings.

**94. Revision of the Code.**—Thus Jason Lee, the true founder of a commonwealth, took his leave of Oregon, but the tide of events stayed not for him. On the second Tuesday in May, 1844, the election of the legislative and executive committees under the new Provisional Government took place.<sup>127</sup> Power fell largely into the hands of the newcomers of 1843 who proceeded to cure some of the defects in the fundamental law. Convinced that no government can survive without raising taxes, they provided for a regular levy and insured its collection by ordaining that no

<sup>127</sup>Dr Elijah White addressed the committee in favor of the law. In December of this year, 1844, an act was passed to erect a jail at Oregon City from the proceeds of Ewing Young's estate. The eagerness of the colonists for laws and a jail contrasts curiously with the fact that crime was virtually unknown among them. Perhaps there never was a community in the world where life came nearer to the ideal of the golden age than in this pioneer colony of Oregon.



person who declined to pay taxes should enjoy the protection of the colony. His land might be taken from him or his cattle stolen and he would have no redress. He was also deprived of the right to vote. The weak executive committee was abolished and a governor substituted, while the judiciary was re-formed. Besides these changes in the provisional code the legislative committee of 1844 repealed the land law and enacted a better one. The right to take up claims was restricted to free whites over eighteen years of age, and to widows and white men under eighteen who were heads of families. The claimant must also be an actual resident. None of the early legislation of Oregon was more important than the land laws because it was the hunger for independent farms that had been the fundamental inducement to the emigrants.

**95. Marriage and Liquor Laws.**—The marriage law which the committee adopted forms a curious comment upon the social conditions in the new colony where the men largely outnumbered the women. The marriage of a man of sixteen with a girl of twelve was legalized, though the consent of their parents was required. It should also be recorded to the credit of the legislative committee that it passed a prohibitory liquor law, one of the first in history for so large a territory. In the sentiment which inspired it we may undoubtedly trace the wholesome influence of Jason Lee. <sup>128</sup>

<sup>128</sup>This remark was often made by Judge C. B. Bellinger, the successor of Matthew P. Deady in the United States District Court. Judge Bellinger was a man of wide culture, liberal sentiments and profound knowledge of pioneer conditions.



**96. Ratification of the Provisional Government.—**

The legislative committee of 1844, although it made great changes in the Organic Law neglected to submit its acts to the people for ratification. This omission was corrected by the succeeding committee which made further alterations and brought the government of Oregon into close resemblance to that of an ordinary American state. The provisional government thus revised and improved was finally ratified by popular vote July 26, 1845. The thoughtful student will be interested in tracing the slow growth of the pioneer community from a condition of primitive anarchy where all men were their own masters to an organized commonwealth where each had sacrificed much of his original liberty for the good of the whole, and indeed for his own greater good. The development of government in Oregon was literally by a process of contract.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>129</sup>The philosophic and enlightened Jesse Applegate maintained that the legislature had no law-making power except such as the people had expressly delegated, all the rest inhered in the citizens. We may find here, if we like, the fundamental principal of the initiative and referendum indigenous in a genuine American brain.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE EMIGRATIONS OF 1844 AND 1845

**97. Emigration of 1844.**—The migratory impulse in the Mississippi Valley which had brought a large company to Oregon in 1843 continued to operate for a number of years. In the spring of 1844 it was stimulated by good reports from those who had gone before. They had driven their ox-wagons through to the Willamette Valley and opened the road. The expense of the journey was found upon the whole to be moderate. Prices were high for produce and markets open, while the soil was found to be as fertile as any in the world. The word which went back across the mountains to the eager and adventurous souls from the Mississippi to the Alleghanies was encouraging in every way.<sup>130</sup> In the spring of 1844 a company of some 1,400 persons took the trail for Oregon. A wet season delayed them on the plains of the Platte and made their arrival late at Fort Hall so that their provisions ran out and they were compelled to subsist on such scanty supplies as they could obtain at Walla Walla and from the cunning savages. Moreover the autumn rains overtook them on the way and although most of them finally reached the Willamette Valley it was in a state of destitution for many and through great hardships for all.

**98. Difficulties of the New Settlers. Progress.**—Naturally they repined while the winter weather lasted and their complaints were embittered by the lack of

<sup>130</sup>Schafer quotes their enthusiastic letters to their friends.

supplies in the colony. The Hudson Bay Company had little or nothing in the way of food and clothing to sell at that time, while the emigrants of the preceding year had drawn heavily upon the hospitality and supplies of the colonists. Hence until spring broke there was some actual suffering among the new arrivals and much discomfort. But with the sunshine and flowers gaiety succeeded to gloom. The latest emigrants took up land, sowed their fields and before another winter they had become an integral part of the community. They were old settlers themselves ready to help welcome another band of emigrants from the states. In the fall of 1845 some three thousand came, just about doubling the population of the country and raising the total vote for governor above one thousand at the next election. By the close of 1845 three new counties had been organized, Polk, west of the Willamette and Vancouver and Lewis north of the Columbia. The American settlements in the two latter began with members of the immigrant party of 1844. Some of them wintered at Vancouver and the next spring, 1845, followed M. T. Simmons to Puget Sound where they took up claims.<sup>131</sup>

**99. Submission of the Hudson Bay Company.**—In apportioning taxes the legislative committee naturally met the difficulty of assigning a status to the Hud-

<sup>131</sup>On the way they passed the cabin of John R. Jackson who also belonged to the emigrants of 1844 and had settled north of the Cowlitz. The Hudson Bay Company already had farms opened at Puget Sound under the name of the Puget Sound Agricultural Company.

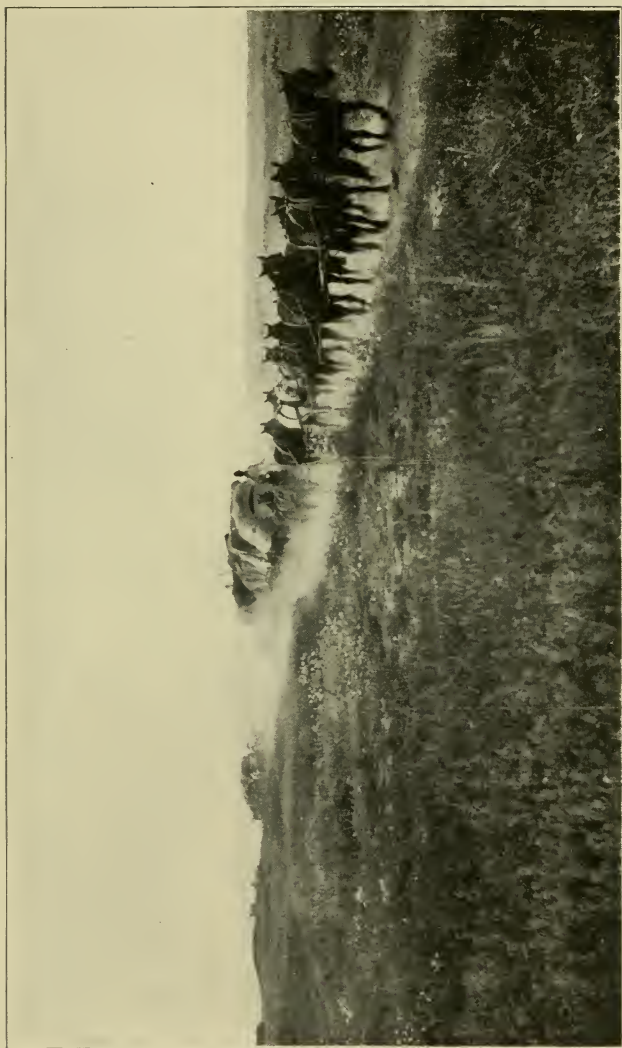
son Bay Company's employees and property under the provisional government. If the Company declined to pay taxes it would become an outlaw and receive no protection. Thus its condition would be perilous, for the colonists were now numerous and many of them hostile to everything British while the government at London seemed in no haste to promise assistance in case of difficulty. In these circumstances the committee opened negotiations with Dr. McLoughlin and finally, in 1845, received his consent to pay taxes and accept the benefits of the laws of Oregon. With this action the fur company disappears from the politics of the coast as a separate power. Dr. McLoughlin deserves high commendation for his action in this matter as well as for his humanity to the emigrants and his consistent generosity; but he was misunderstood both in Oregon and England, receiving blame when he should have been praised. Weary of difficulties which seemed endless he resigned from the headship of the company in Oregon in the fall of 1845 and went to live at Oregon City where he had property. Here he passed the remainder of his singularly beautiful and useful life.

## CHAPTER XVI

### OPENING OF THE SOUTHERN ROUTE

**100. White's Search for a Pass.**—In the summer of 1845 the legislative committee framed a memorial to Congress asking for a territorial government among other things, and entrusted it to Dr. Elijah White for transmission to Washington since he had determined to go there on business of his own. Just before setting out White explored somewhat in the mountains east of the Willamette Valley for a pass by which emigrants might come directly to the upper Willamette and avoid the Blue Mountains and the dangers at The Dalles. He did not succeed in discovering the pass but he seems to have had strong faith that it existed and to have told one of the emigrant parties, which he met near Fort Boise, that the Willamette Valley might be reached by a route which would avoid the hardships that had befallen those who went by way of The Dalles and save some two hundred miles of travel. His plan was to follow the Malheur River for a certain distance and then strike across the unknown country to the pass supposed to exist in the mountains at the head of the Willamette Valley.

**101. A Misguided Party.**—Either misled by White's advice or for some reason unknown, about one hundred and fifty wagons from the emigration of 1845 undertook to follow this precarious route with Stephen H. L. Meek for a guide. For some days they kept to an



BEFORE THE RAILROAD





abandoned trail of the fur trappers but after that the desolate Malheur Mountains had to be crossed where the stones wore the feet of the oxen to the quick and grass and water could not be found. Pushing forward through a scorched and barren land, thirst and starvation brought death upon the weaker members of the party and broke the spirit of the strongest. Since their stock was perishing unless water was soon discovered, they could neither go forward nor return, and one of those terrible tragedies of the desert seemed imminent in which whole bands of human beings are swallowed up by death leaving no record of their sufferings but their whitened bones. But this fate was happily averted. After days of search in every direction some of the outriders came upon a tributary of the Des Chutes River which the surviving adventurers joyfully followed down to The Dalles and thence made their way to the Willamette Valley.

**102. Exploration of the Southern Route.**—The other emigrants of 1845, of whom there were altogether about three thousand, also suffered more or less between Fort Hall and the Willamette Valley, like those who had preceded them. Indeed this had come to be recognized as the most difficult part of the entire journey and many efforts were made to discover a better route. In 1845 S. K. Barlow obtained from the legislature a charter for a road around Mount Hood which would enable travelers to reach the Valley without making the passage at The Dalles. He actually constructed the road but it remained difficult to traverse and it was agreed that a better one was desirable. With the

purpose of opening such a route Jesse Applegate, with his brother Lindsay, and a party of fifteen men left their homes in Polk county, June 22, 1846, to seek for a practicable opening into the Valley from the south. To the foot of the Siskiyou range they had only to follow the California trail which was by that time well beaten. Their only departure from it was to lay their course through the canyon of the Umpqua instead of traversing the high ridges adjacent to it where the savages had harassed the early travelers. At the Siskiyou, being then only six miles from the California line, they turned eastward and by practicable passes attained the summit of the Cascades on July 4, 1846, whence they soon reached the Klamath River and obtained a beautiful view of its fertile valley. Making their way up the Klamath River they reached Klamath Lake, rounded its southern end and passed on, with ceaseless vigilance against the treacherous Modocs, to Lost River, which they forded on a ledge of rock. Steadily forging ahead by a difficult but not impracticable route through a rocky desert interspersed with springs and oases, they came, on July 8, to the ridge which divides the lake region of Oregon from the Humboldt River and the basin of Great Salt Lake. As the explorers pressed forward toward the Humboldt River they did not escape the miseries of the desert. Heat and thirst tormented them and the irons and ashes of some wagons which they found in a lonely canyon seemed to warn them of impending doom. But they were not the men to forsake their purpose either for superstitious or real terrors. July

18th, brought them to the Humboldt River which they followed until they came to an extensive meadow where they camped and rested three days to recruit their horses, resuming the march on the 25th by a route where grass and water were abundant. Their purpose was to explore through to Bear River,<sup>132</sup> but before they reached it their provisions ran short and Jesse Applegate with four others proceeded to Fort Hall for supplies while the rest of the party pushed on to the destination.

**103. Emigrants on the Southern Route.**—While Jesse Applegate and his party were at Fort Hall, August, 1846, the emigrants of that year were passing. He represented to them truthfully that the southern route by which he had come to Fort Hall was preferable in many respects to the road along the Snake and Columbia Rivers. The grass was everywhere better except in the alkali desert, which might be avoided for the most part, while in the Klamath, Rogue and Umpqua valleys it was both excellent and plentiful with abundance of water. There were no mountains to cross except the Cascades which offered an easier pass than the one on the Barlow road south of Mt. Hood. Persuaded by these facts an emigrant caravan of about a hundred wagons chose the southern route. They left Fort Hall August 9, 1846, and reached the rendezvous of Jesse Applegate's party at Thousand Springs in the Humboldt region on the 12th. Here it was settled that the Applegates with all but two of

<sup>132</sup>About sixty miles from Fort Hall.

their men should push ahead in company with volunteers from the emigrants to blaze and cut a road for the wagons which were to follow with Levi Scott and David Goff for guides. The advance party did their work faithfully and there is no fault to find with the guides; but the emigrants, in spite of urgent counsel from Jesse Applegate, lingered on their dangerous way during the pleasant days of autumn and, most unhappily, they had no Marcus Whitman to spur them onward by incessant rebukes. The chill rains of October caught some of the belated emigrants in the Rogue River Valley sixty miles from the Umpqua canyon which they only reached on the 4th of November, so worn with travel were their miserable cattle, and, in the narrow passage, some who had abandoned their wagons were compelled to wade for miles through the swollen stream with their enfeebled bodies chilled to the bone. In the Umpqua Valley they ate the last of their provisions and undoubtedly many would have perished had not timely succor arrived from the Applegates and their comrades. It was February, 1847, before the last of the emigrants found shelter in Fort Umpqua. The sufferings of the first party to pass over it somewhat discredited the southern route. Still in the fall of 1847 Levi Scott guided another band of emigrants over it who reached the Willamette Valley in prime condition and in good season. Thus its desirability was established and during the troubles with the Indians in the north which now broke out it proved of great use. It was the explorations of

Jesse Applegate's party that opened up southern Oregon to settlement.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>133</sup>In 1849 he removed from Polk County to Yoncalla in the Umpqua Valley and his brother Charles settled near him. Lindsay Applegate chose a site on Ashland Creek for his home. It was where Ashland now stands and on the line of the road he had helped open. The descendants of these brothers still dwell in the verdant meadows of the Klamath country.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE WHITMAN MASSACRE AND THE CAYUSE WAR

**104. The Massacre.**—The return of Marcus Whitman from the East with the emigrants of 1843 availed little for his pining missions. The Indians received him with fickle enthusiasm, but they soon resumed their impudent, half-hostile conduct and the missionaries had less and less influence over them as the years passed. In the summer of 1847 the children of the passing emigrants were suffering from measles,<sup>134</sup> and of course the disease was communicated to the Indians.<sup>135</sup> Dr. Whitman treated both whites and savages with the same remedies. The former recovered while the latter almost always died. This was clearly an unhappy consequence of their habits of life but the poor creatures explained it by saying that Whitman was giving them poison instead of medicine and they resolved to treat him as they did their own medicine men whose sorcery failed. A plot was formed to murder Dr. Whitman on November 29, 1847, and it was carried out. In the afternoon of that day the devoted missionary who had given his best years to the welfare of the Indians was massacred by them together with

<sup>134</sup>When we read of the plagues which attacked the immigrants it seems astonishing that so many of them reached their destination. They must have been of hardier frames than the men and women of our day, though, perhaps after all, their children would display the same qualities if necessity demanded it.

<sup>135</sup>They would have caught it from the garments they stole if in no other way.

his wife and seven other persons. Within a few days five more whites were slain while some fifty women and children, emigrants staying at the station for the most part, were taken captive to be held as hostages against the vengeance of the colonists in the Willamette Valley. The effects of the Whitman massacre were felt both in the Willamette Valley and at Washington, the capital of the Nation.

**105. Release of the Captives.**—Undoubtedly the captives held by the Cayuses as well as Spalding and his family at Lapwai owed their lives to the energetic action of the officers of the Hudson Bay Company. With all expedition after the massacre, Agent McBean sent a messenger from Walla Walla to Vancouver with the news which was received at the fort on December 7, 1847, and by the next day had spread through the Valley exciting fears all the more terrible because the extent of the massacre was unknown and what might follow could only be imagined. Many believed that the Indians would fall upon the colony from all sides in a concerted attack for the extermination of the whites. From Vancouver, Peter Skeene Ogden set out with all speed for the country of the Cayuses and by the exercise of that wonderful influence which the fur company had gained over the savages by years of justice and kindly firmness he obtained the release of the captives and despatched them with the Spaldings to the Willamette Valley where their woes were mitigated by the care of sympathizing friends. Drawing heavily upon their slender resources and straining their credit with the Hudson Bay Company, the colonists



equipped a regiment of troops which proceeded to the Cayuse country in midwinter under Cornelius Gilliam, and after months of exasperating warfare with the Indians brought them partially to terms.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>136</sup>Hostilities continued fitfully till the spring of 1850 when five of the murderers were secured. They were executed at Oregon City on June 3, 1850.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### OREGON MADE A TERRITORY

**106. A Memorial to Congress.**—With the troops on their way to the Cayuse war went Joe Meek bearing a memorial to Congress which the Oregon legislature had prepared in their dire emergency and entrusted to him for delivery. It recounted the calamity which had befallen the colony and told of the well-grounded fear that many of the powerful tribes had formed an alliance against the settlements. The memorialists declared that they had not the means to repel attacks so formidable, and recalling how often they had hitherto appealed in vain to the national government for protection, protesting their unwavering loyalty to the country and pleading their rights as citizens, they reiterated the prayer that Congress should aid them in the extremity of their distress and grant them the permanent benefit of the laws of the Union. "We shall look with glowing hopes and restless anxiety for the coming of your laws and your arms." Thus ran their pathetic appeal. It was the 4th of March, 1848, before Joe Meek and his nine companions could arrange to separate from the army in the Cayuse country and depart for the east. Once on the way, however, they traveled swiftly and at the end of sixty days they were at St. Joseph, Missouri.<sup>137</sup> Six days more brought them to St. Louis, whence the news of the

<sup>137</sup>O time and change! Who would call such traveling swift today?

Whitman massacre flashed over the telegraph to every part of the country.

**107. End of Joint Occupation.**—It came at a critical moment. During the five years which followed the great emigration in 1843, the Oregon question agitated the country incessantly. Meetings to urge Congress to act were held in many towns of the Mississippi Valley. In July, 1843, an Oregon Convention was held at Cincinnati that was attended by a hundred delegates and whose proceedings interested the whole country. This convention declared for 54° 40' as the northern boundary of Oregon under the impulse of stern hostility to Great Britain. The Democratic party sympathized with this program so strongly that it was made part of their platform in 1844, and their candidate, James K. Polk, went into office on a wave of the "fifty-four forty or fight" enthusiasm. Tyler went out of office March 4, 1845, with "the one wish" of settling the Oregon controversy unfulfilled. Polk took up the task where his predecessor had left it and in spite of the slogan which had helped to elect him offered to compromise on the 49th parallel, but Great Britain refused, and when the President finally withdrew his offer, stating that no further concessions would be made, and terminated the joint occupation arrangement by authority of Congress, war seemed imminent.<sup>138</sup> Wise counsels on both sides averted

<sup>138</sup>The war feeling was stronger in Oregon than in any other part of the country, but it was strong enough everywhere. A British vessel of war was anchored in the Columbia and Douglas, who had succeeded McLoughlin, mounted cannon at Vancouver. The pioneers made many threats.

the calamity however. In June, 1846, Great Britain signified her readiness to accept the 49th parallel which she had refused so often, a treaty to that effect was signed on June 15, 1846, and Oregon became definitely a part of the United States.

**108. Oregon Made a Territory.**—But for all that it continued under the provisional government three years longer. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois presented a bill to erect Oregon into a territory at the session of 1846–7, but the clause forbidding slavery which he copied from the First Organic Law<sup>139</sup> excited the hostility of the pro-slavery southerners and it was rejected. James Buchanan, who was then Secretary of State, thought it worth while to try to soothe the disappointment of the Oregonians by a letter notable for smoothness rather than point, and Thomas H. Benton, their tireless friend in placing the blame upon Calhoun encouraged them to hope for action at the next session of Congress. When Congress met President Polk vigorously pleaded the cause of Oregon in his message, but the pro-slavery opposition was no less virulent than before and might have succeeded in obtaining further delay had not public opinion, fired by the news of the Whitman massacre, irresistibly demanded action. Joe Meek reached St. Louis on May 17, 1848, and gave his terrible report to the country. Going thence to Washington he delivered his despatches to the President who at once transmitted them to Congress with an urgent message. The opposition

<sup>139</sup>The Oregon pioneers copied it from the ordinance of 1787, which established the Northwest Territory.

then reluctantly gave way, and on August 14, 1848, Oregon was made a territory of the Union. General Joseph Lane of Indiana who had become prominent in the Mexican war was appointed the first territorial governor by President Polk, while Joseph L. Meek, who is affectionately known in history as "Joe" Meek, was made United States Marshal in recognition of his valorous activities. Late in August Governor Lane with Meek and others set out for Oregon by the Santa Fé route. From San Francisco they finished the journey by water, reaching Oregon City, the temporary capital, on March 2, 1849, and the next day Governor Lane proclaimed that he had entered on the duties of his office and that the laws of the United States were thenceforth to be in force in Oregon.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>140</sup>From June 3, 1845, to March 3, 1849, George Abernethy was governor of Oregon under the provisional government. This includes the entire period between the disuse of the executive committee and the appointment of Lane. Lane resigned June 18, 1850, and from 1851 to 1859 represented Oregon in Congress. In 1859 he was elected to the Senate for the short term of two years and in 1860 was nominated for Vice-President with Breckenridge. After this date Lane's southern sympathies made him unpopular in Oregon and he lived in retirement, dying in 1881. His services in the Indian wars were of great value.

## CHAPTER XIX

### CONDITION OF OREGON IN 1848

**109. Oregon in 1848.**—Before the beginning of Autumn, 1848, the Cayuse war had been brought to a close and Congress had erected Oregon into a territory. At about the same time news reached the settlers that gold had been discovered in California in the preceding January. Profound economic changes in the territory followed upon this discovery, but before describing them it may be best to glance at the progress which Oregon had made in the fourteen years since Jason Lee came over the mountains with Wyeth and planted the seeds of civilization on the banks of the Willamette. Of course conditions were still primitive but the savages had almost disappeared from the Valley, the rule of the Hudson Bay Company had given way to American law, and the irregular industry of the trappers and hunters had been succeeded by farming and stock raising. The white population amounted to some 12,000 persons in 1848 and the best land of the Valley had been taken up; but comparatively little had been fenced in. Most of the country was still an open range where cattle freely roamed and grazed. Opulent settlers had herds of 2,000 head or more. The grass was luxuriant and the natural increase of the cattle provided an easy living for their owners. The free life of the range was more attractive to the young men of the colony than plowing and cultivating the soil,

and therefore we read without surprise that comparatively little land was farmed. From twenty to fifty acres of grain would be found on a claim of 640 acres. The low price of grain and the scarcity of implements also contributed to make agriculture irksome. Wheat was thrashed by driving horses over the sheaves,<sup>141</sup> and the usual price was sixty-two and one-half cents a bushel, though in 1845 after the great inrush of immigrants it rose to a dollar and a half. In 1848 there were nine gristmills in the territory, while numerous sawmills made lumber cheap and plentiful.

**110. Discomforts of the Pioneers.**—Foreign trade had not thriven as well as the pioneers expected. It was somewhat discouraged by the dangers at the mouth of the Columbia where a number of ships were wrecked about the year 1848, but the principal impediment was the lack of a circulating medium. Coin was very scarce. Wheat, orders on merchants, and government paper all passed current within the colony, but of course outsiders would not receive them in exchange for manufactured goods. Hence it was impossible for the settlers to procure civilized clothing. Children went to school wearing a single garment which resembled the Roman toga. Men and women were clad in buckskin. Sometimes a gown was pieced together from an old blanket or from the remnants of grain bags. Judges went barefoot and legislators were hard put to it to buy a new coat. They had abundant wealth but they lacked the common comforts of life

<sup>141</sup>The first thrashing machine was built at Oregon City in 1848 by Wallace and Wilson. It became popular immediately.



because they could not exchange for it. Schoolbooks were also scarce. An edition of Webster's Spelling book was printed at Oregon City in 1847, but this excellent work could not impart a complete education. Arithmetics, geographies and the like were also needed and they were not to be had. Internal communication was still slow and difficult. There were some small boats on the rivers but not many. Heavy articles were transported in ox wagons and horseback riding was the favorite method of going about. Much practice made the people good riders. Young men went courting on their ponies with their blankets in a roll behind the saddle. It was the fashion to camp on the cabin floor at bedtime and ride away after breakfast the next morning. Young people married in their teens and families were large. Oregon City, with a population of six hundred, was the largest town in Oregon. Portland was but a hamlet with two frame and several log houses.<sup>142</sup> Salem was a little village, and Eugene, Albany and Corvallis were still only land claims.

**111. Pioneer Schools.**—The settlers had not forgotten education in spite of their hardships and the scarcity of books. The common school system had not yet been organized. The Catholics already had three schools, one for boys at St. Paul, while at both Oregon City and St. Mary they had built schools for

<sup>142</sup>The site of Portland, 640 acres, was taken up by Overton in 1843. He sold it in 1845 to Lovejoy and Pettygrove, who laid out the town and sold lots to settlers. The first house was a log cabin at the corner of Front and Washington streets, built in 1844.

girls. Jason Lee's Oregon Institute was flourishing at Salem. At Rickreall in Polk county there was a protestant school called the Jefferson Institute. Pacific University at Forest Grove originated in 1846 with a school, afterward Tualatin Academy, which Harvey Clark taught on his land claim. Mrs. Tabitha Brown, who came to Oregon in 1846 by the Southern route, joined him and opened an orphans' school in a log cabin on his land where by 1848 she had forty children enrolled. In that year the Reverend G. H. Atkinson arrived with authority from the Congregational Home Missionary Society to organize a college, and Clark gave him 200 acres of land while Tabitha Brown donated a city lot and \$500 cash for the good cause. Of course their private schools now merged into the larger project, and in 1853 it was chartered as Pacific University.

**112. Social Conditions.**—Ministers were more numerous than either doctors or lawyers. There was preaching everywhere on Sunday, though church buildings were not yet numerous. Oregon City, the metropolis, had three, and the only others besides the Catholic Churches, were at Salem and Hillsboro. The population in general was healthy, orderly and happy. Life was simple, but it was wholesome. Crime was almost unknown, the climate was mild and salubrious and labor was light. The period between 1834 and 1848 was the golden age of Oregon. The people now plunged into the feverish excitement of the gold discoveries and the Arcadian simplicity of the Eden by the Willamette passed away forever.



A MOUNTAIN CANYON



## CHAPTER XX

### DISCOVERY OF GOLD

**113. The Rush to the Diggings.**—California was acquired by the United States by conquest in the Mexican War and its possession was confirmed by the treaty of February 2, 1848, which arranged the terms of peace. On January 24, ten days before the treaty was signed, gold was discovered on the American River about fifty miles above Sutter's fort. News of the discovery spread rapidly and soon great crowds were hurrying from all parts of California to the diggings. Before winter the news had crossed the Rocky Mountains creating wild excitement everywhere. Thousands of men, both in the Atlantic states and in the Mississippi Valley, prepared to start for the land of gold as soon as spring should open. The easterners went by way of the Isthmus of Panama; those from the west followed the emigrant trail. Twenty-five thousand persons, nearly all men, were on the way as soon as spring opened and others followed them all the summer through. Thus emigration and settlement were diverted from the northern section of the Pacific Coast to California which was settled up rapidly, far outstripping Oregon in the race for population.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>143</sup>In 1850 California had 92,000 population, Oregon 14,000. In 1870 Oregon, Washington and Idaho had 130,000, California 560,000. So much did the discovery of gold change the development of the country as it had begun under natural conditions.

**114. The Gold Fever in Oregon.**—The news that gold had been discovered in California was learned in Oregon toward the close of the summer of 1848, about the time when the Cayuse war was concluded. It produced the same excitement there as in the rest of the country. Hired hands left their work, soldiers deserted, the servants of the Hudson Bay Company forgot their traditional loyalty, farmers forsook their farms and public officials resigned to take the trail for the land of gold. Within a year Oregon lost perhaps two-thirds of her adult male population. Some of them became permanent residents of California and helped to form the civilization of that interesting state, but most of them returned in a short time bringing with them coin to pay off debts, improve their farms, build houses and stimulate trade. The men who stayed quietly on their farms and raised supplies to feed the miners probably reaped a richer harvest than those who toiled in the diggings. The inrush of adventurers to California provided an eager market for all that could be produced in Oregon. Prices were high and times were good. To illustrate the impetus which Oregon agriculture received from the California demand it is worth while to mention that by 1851 the orchards which had been set out in the Willamette Valley in 1847 began to bear; at Oregon City a good crop of apples and cherries was harvested and four bushels of apples were sold in San Francisco for \$500. Moreover, though the tide of emigration set strongly toward California, Oregon was not badly slighted.

Out of the 40,000 persons who came to the Coast in 1850 Oregon received 8,000, which assured a steady if not exceptional growth.



## CHAPTER XXI

### DEVELOPMENT. INDIAN WARS

**115. Internal Development.**—Meanwhile the internal development of Oregon proceeded apace. In 1849 the legislature established the irreducible school fund and levied a tax for public schools. Boards of directors were also provided for, and regular school meetings authorized. Thus education passed under the control of the state, a move which tended to make social conditions more attractive to desirable settlers from the east. Another advance toward social stability was made when, September 27, 1850, Congress passed the "Donation Land Law." This act confirmed the title of the original settlers to their claims by assigning to each family resident in the territory before 1850 a square mile of land, half going to the wife and half to the husband. Unmarried men received only 320 acres, while unmarried women received nothing, which seemed to smack of injustice, since it is admitted by everybody that the women had done fully as much as the men to overcome difficulties and build up a commonwealth. Male emigrants coming to Oregon between 1850 and 1853 received under the donation law 160 acres of land. If the man was married 160 more went to the wife. This provision is said to have induced many young people to rush prematurely into matrimony.<sup>144</sup> The special

<sup>144</sup>Some historians hold that the donation law retarded the development of the state by making the farms too large and the population too sparse. Certainly a square mile of land seems to be ample for the support of a single family. In 1854 Congress granted 160 acres to each orphan child of any emigrant who had died before 1850. Under this act Jason Lee's daughter held a claim.

privileges under the donation law expired in 1855. After that time claims were taken up in Oregon under the general statutes of the United States.

**116. Settlements in Southern Oregon.**—The southern route which Jesse Applegate and his comrades had opened was more or less used by immigrants each year and by 1850 some of them had begun to locate here and there on the attractive lands of the Rogue River and Umpqua Valleys. Naturally the continuous travel of pack trains back and forth between Oregon and California also made this part of the country better known and stimulated settlement. In the spring of 1850 two parties entered the Umpqua Valley for the purpose of taking up land and laying out towns. One from Oregon was led by Jesse Applegate, the other was from California. The two parties united their interests and in consequence of their efforts settlers soon began to flock to the Valley of the Umpqua. The California prospectors pushed unremittingly northward in search of new diggings. Before long they had crossed the Siskiyou into Oregon and miners were to be found at many places in the Rogue River and Umpqua Valleys as early as 1850. Prospecting and settlement went hand in hand. The Indians were troublesome, robbing and murdering without mercy whenever they dared, but upon the whole General Lane at the head of the settlers kept them pretty well in check up to the summer of 1851.

**117. Indian Troubles on Rogue River.**—The time had now come when the Indians from Puget Sound to the Rogue River Valley, including those in Eastern

Washington and Oregon, began to perceive clearly the consequences which must follow from the constant influx of whites. They foresaw that they must lose their lands unless they could drive out the settlers and prevent others from coming. The result was a more or less concerted movement of the savages against the settlers all along the border and intermittent warfare which did not cease entirely until the power of the Modocs was destroyed in 1873. The Rogue River Indians had always been intolerant of intruders, treacherous, wily and cruel. The settlers did not make much effort to conciliate them. Isolated outrages finally, in 1851, merged into hard fighting and it was not until 1856 that the Rogue River tribes were entirely subdued and placed upon reservations. While the war continued settlements were founded at Coos Bay and Port Orford partly as bases for military operations. Coal was discovered at Coos Bay and trade grew up with San Francisco. The strength of the whites in the Rogue River Country was greatly increased in the fall of 1851 by the discovery of rich placers on Jackson Creek which attracted many prospectors from California, while in spite of the savagery of Indian warfare settlers continued to take up land along the Rogue River and its branches.

**118.** Before the close of the Rogue River War the Indians east of the mountains broke out into open hostilities in defense of their lands. The severe fighting began in 1855, and was not brought to an end till 1858. Most of the tribes were united in a league against the whites, while the federal military authorities

failed to coöperate effectively with the legislature of Oregon. This circumstance undoubtedly prolonged the war and needlessly increased the hardships of the settlers, but by the close of the year 1858 most of the Indians had been compelled to enter into treaties by which they gave up their right to roam over the country and consented to live upon reservations. From 1861 to 1869 there was again desultory Indian fighting east of the mountains in which the whites had little to boast of until General Crook took command of the federal troops. He soon compelled the savages to sue for peace, in 1868, and received the thanks of the Oregon legislature for bringing hostilities to a close.

**119. The Modoc Trouble.**—With all the Oregon Indians the government at Washington pursued a policy of paternal indulgence which was seldom appreciated and sometimes excited contempt. It was particularly unfortunate with the Modocs, a tribe living about Klamath Lake and on the border between Oregon and California. These savages, under the leadership of a chief called Captain Jack, were treated with a lack of firmness which ultimately encouraged them to go on the warpath, in 1872. The troops and settlers were not very successful against them at first and the Indians gained a number of petty advantages which made them bolder than before. They committed terrible outrages on the settlers and were able to escape direct attack by taking refuge in the lava beds of that district which are veined with fissures where parties could lie concealed and through which they could flee when pursued. Finally, in April, 1873,

Captain Jack's band fulfilled the measure of their crimes by treacherously murdering some peace commissioners who were parleying with them. The military then began to act vigorously against them. In May, 1873, the fighting was brought to an end and in the following October Captain Jack and three of his companions were hanged, while the Modocs were removed to the Indian Territory.

**120. Oregon Admitted into the Union.**—Besides his services in the Indian wars, General Joseph Lane, who was territorial delegate in Congress from 1851 to 1859, obtained much beneficial legislation for his constituents. In 1852, for example, the mail service which had always been dilatory and inefficient, was improved at his instance. He also secured an appropriation to open a military road from the Umpqua to the Rogue River Valley, and another from Scottsburg on the Umpqua to connect with this. General Lane also introduced a bill in 1856 for the admission of Oregon into the Union as a state, but owing to the slavery dissensions it did not pass. The territorial legislature, however, submitted to the electors in June, 1857, the question whether or not a constitutional convention should be held. The vote being favorable, the convention was called to meet at Salem on the third Monday in August. The delegates chosen from the various counties attended, and after a discussion which lasted four weeks they agreed upon a state constitution which was duly submitted to the voters and ratified on the 9th of November, 1857. The total number of votes

was 10,400 of which 7,195 were in favor of the constitution. On February 14, 1859, Congress formally admitted Oregon into the Union.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>145</sup>Washington became a state in 1889, Idaho in 1890. Both were originally parts of Oregon.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE INLAND EMPIRE

**121. Early Settlements in Eastern Oregon.**—Whitman and his fellow missionaries had shown as early as 1837 that the land in the Walla Walla Valley was remarkably fertile, and the later efforts of that devoted pioneer proved how easily tracts apparently sterile might be made to produce abundant crops by irrigation. Still to the eyes of the passing immigrants the country in Oregon and Washington east of the Cascades presented but a desolate spectacle, and it was not till about 1855 that settlers began to feel attracted in that direction. By this time they had learned that great areas of the semi-arid region had rainfall enough to produce wheat without irrigation, while numerous valleys had been explored where crops of all kinds could be raised. The outbreak of Indian troubles in 1855 retarded the settlement of eastern Oregon for ten years or more after that date, but on October 31, 1858, General Harney of the Oregon military department opened the Walla Walla Valley to settlement, and the fact that 2,000 claims were taken up there and in the Umatilla region during the next summer indicates how well the value of the land had become understood. Out of the emigration of 1859, which numbered some 30,000 souls, about 10,000 made Oregon and Washington their destination. Eight hundred people located in the



Walla Walla Valley while others pushed on into the charming Yakima country, and still others began settlements in the Grande Ronde where the weary immigrants of 1843 had longed to tarry but dared not because it was so far from supplies and shelter. Now Walla Walla had become a distributing center whence pack trains permeated the whole Inland Empire and the dangers of isolation had partially passed away.<sup>146</sup> In the winter of 1861-2 La Grande was founded and grew rapidly, while settlers began to cultivate the fertile soil of the surrounding valley. Great excitement followed the discovery of gold on the John Day and Powder Rivers in 1861. Prospectors flocked to the new diggings from California and the entire coast. Towns sprang up in a day when fresh mines were opened and vanished when they were exhausted, but there were permanent results also. The Powder River Valley was settled by farmers in the prosperous summer of 1862 and Baker City was founded.

**122. A Period of Great Activity.**—This was a time of great activity throughout the Inland Empire. Mining flourished in numerous places, farming had begun at almost every accessible point and the business of transportation by pack trains was diligently pursued by enterprising men some of whom afterward made their mark in the state. Portland had become the great central market for the northwest and its growth was now rapid. Pack trains from The Dalles made regular trips into the John Day country, but those from Walla

<sup>146</sup>A wagon road was built from Walla Walla into the Grande Ronde in 1863.

Walla covered a much wider territory, some of them even crossing the Rocky Mountains and meeting steamboat traffic on the Missouri from the east.

**123. The Flood of 1861 and the Winter that Followed.**—A terrible flood devastated the entire coast region in the fall of 1861. Every river valley from California to Puget Sound was overflowed. Houses were swept away and property of all kinds destroyed. A winter followed of such severity that the pack trains could not penetrate the eastern region with supplies and the miners who had neglected to lay in provisions starved and froze in the inaccessible mountains. The next spring there was a great freshet in the Columbia which virtually annihilated the beginnings of settlement on its alluvial flats. This succession of misfortunes naturally checked the development of Oregon somewhat, but it was only for a moment. The summer of 1862 was one of rapid growth, especially in the Inland Empire which received 10,000 immigrants before fall. By 1870 this region of great possibilities was producing more wheat and other supplies than the mines could consume and the people were impatient for a railroad which might afford them an outlet to the markets of the world.<sup>147</sup>

<sup>147</sup>The navigation of the Columbia was impeded by rapids here and there which made transshipments necessary so that water carriage was expensive.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### INTERNAL COMMUNICATION. LAND GRANTS

**124. The Military Wagon Road.**—The problem of internal communication has always been a serious one in Oregon. Even to this day it has not been entirely solved. The pioneers went about the country on horse-back and moved their heavy goods in ox-wagons. Later steamboats were placed on the rivers which of course made things much better for those who dwelt upon their banks but did little for others. Roads were needed everywhere but to build them required resources beyond the power of a young community to supply. Congress sought to aid Oregon in this important particular by granting to the state the odd numbered sections in a strip six miles wide from Eugene to the eastern boundary for the construction of a military wagon road across the Cascade Mountains. The legislature turned this magnificent donation over to a private corporation, The Oregon Central Military Wagon Road Company, which actually built a road to the summit of the Cascades, but it was never of much use. The road from Ashland to Klamath over the old Applegate trail, which was opened in 1868, was preferred by most travelers. In 1873 the Oregon Central Military Wagon Road Company sold its right to a San Francisco corporation, and thus most of the benefit of the grant was forever lost to the state.

**125. Swamp and School Lands.**—The early legis-

latures were not especially happy in the management of the land grants which the state received from Congress. In 1870 provisions were made for the selection and sale of swamp lands under the Act of 1850 which were so ill-considered that they actually retarded settlement and turned over large tracts to speculators almost without compensation. Oregon received from the government altogether 3,250,000 acres of land for the benefit of the irreducible school fund.<sup>148</sup> In 1881 when 500,000 acres had been sold the returns to the school fund amounted to \$600,000. The Agricultural College which was established at Corvallis in 1868, received a grant of 90,000 acres from Congress while the state university had 46,000 acres. The university was founded in 1862 and opened in 1867, when it had a fund of \$75,000 from the sale of its lands.<sup>149</sup>

**126. Isolation of the Early Settlements.**—Western Oregon has been divided by nature into three distinct regions, the valleys of the Rogue, the Umpqua and the Willamette Rivers, a narrow strip of arable coast being attached to each. These valleys are separated from one another by mountains more or less difficult to traverse like the states of ancient Greece, and in consequence the communities which settled them developed independently. There was little social or commercial

<sup>148</sup>This fund was established by the legislature in 1849.

<sup>149</sup>Ten thousand dollars of this fund came from the proceeds of the confiscated estate of Dr. McLoughlin at Oregon City. This was restored to his heirs by the legislature. The citizens of Lane county raised fifty-two thousand dollars in aid of the university, which was invested in a site and the first building.

intercourse with outsiders.<sup>150</sup> In Eastern Oregon the natural barriers between the different parts are still more numerous and more difficult to traverse. There we find the valleys of the Powder, the Umatilla and the John Day Rivers, the Grande Ronde, the Klamath, and numerous little nooks like Eagle Valley, all separated by lofty mountains from their neighbors. Wagon roads were built between them at an early date but the people were not satisfied with this slow and difficult means of communication. As settlements multiplied and products increased the need of markets, the duties of government, the growing interests which all the inhabitants of the state possessed in common stimulated the demand for railroads.

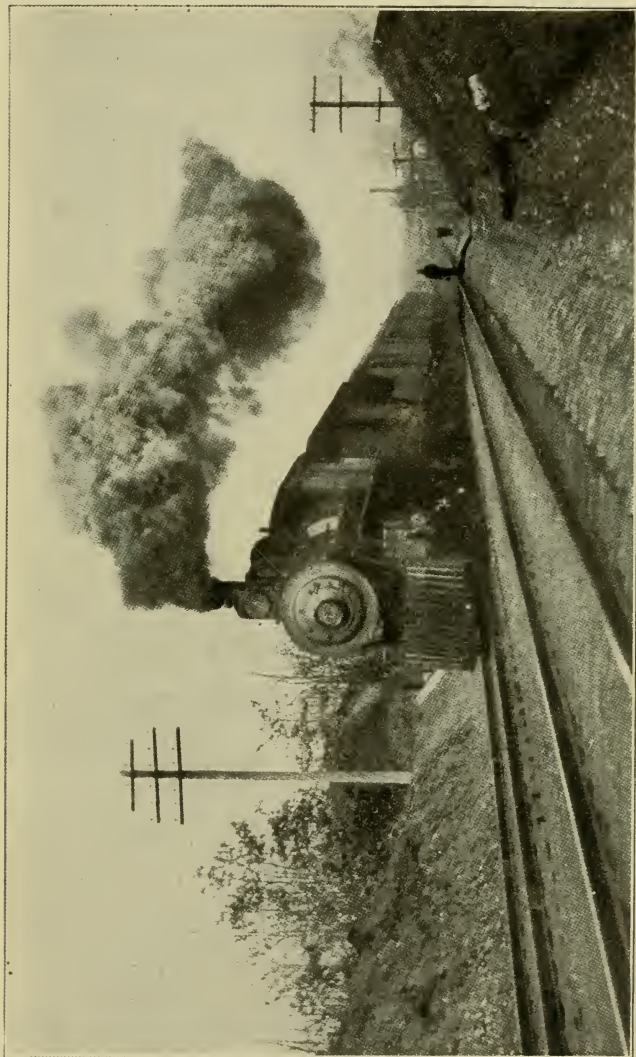
**127. Railroad Building.**—The numerous early railroad projects finally culminated in two lines which were built from Portland along the east and west sides of the Willamette. Ground for the west side line was broken in Portland on April 14, 1868; that for the one on the east side two days later. For some time little work was done upon either because funds were lacking, but in August, 1868, the picturesque and adventurous Ben Holliday, who had made his appearance in Oregon, bought out the east side road and began to push its fortunes with vigor. By December of the next year he had completed twenty miles, enough to secure title to a land grant in controversy between the companies. He then raised money by marketing bonds of his railroad in Germany, managed by skillful

<sup>150</sup>The Coos Bay region has always had more intimate commercial relations with San Francisco than with Portland.

intrigues to obtain control of the west side line and built southward on both sides of the river. In 1873 the Oregon and California Railroad, as the east side road was now called, was completed to Roseburg which remained the terminus until 1887 when the Southern Pacific, which had then obtained possession, extended it to Ashland and united it finally with the California system.

**128. Henry Villard.**—Ben Holliday having fallen into financial difficulties, the German bondholders in 1876 gave the management of the Oregon and California Railroad to Henry Villard who was one of the truly great railroad builders of the last century. He carried out the majestic project of building the Northern Pacific line and completed it to Portland in 1883. When the Oregon Railroad and Navigation Company was incorporated by Portland capitalists, in 1876, Villard was made its president. Under his management the lines of the company were built eastward to connect with the Union Pacific and northward into the wheat growing and mining regions of Washington. Its bridge over the Willamette at Portland, known as the "steel bridge," was completed in 1888 and the union station soon afterward. The railroad connecting Portland with Astoria was opened for traffic in 1898. Villard's worthy successor in railroad building, James J. Hill, completed the great bridge over the Columbia at Vancouver and another only less magnificent over the Willamette in the fall of 1908. By way of these bridges the North Bank road runs trains between

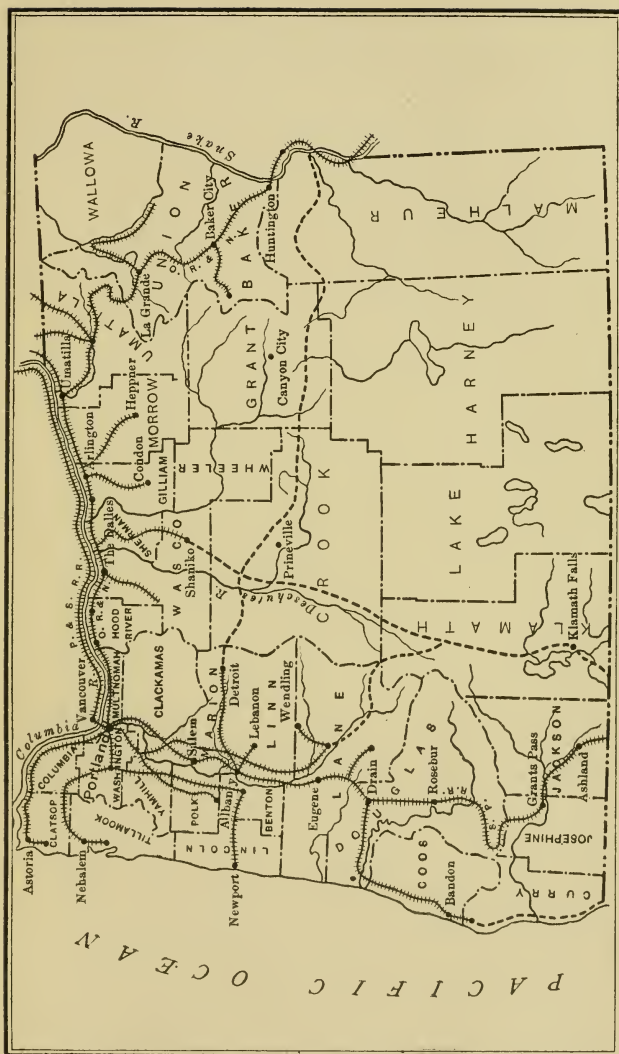




THE NEW OREGON TRAIL







RAILROAD MAP OF OREGON



Portland and Spokane. Thus Oregon has ample railroad connections with the outer world, but its system of internal communication is still far from complete.<sup>151</sup>

<sup>151</sup>The student will see from the map that Oregon east of the Cascades and south of the Columbia is almost destitute of railroads. This isolates from the markets of the world a large and very fertile territory.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### OREGON TODAY

**129. Social Conditions.**—At the present time, 1909, Oregon is a state with 600,000 population. It is still a land of equality as it was in the beginning. The inhabitants are strongly democratic in sentiment and inclined to take advanced views of political problems. The direct primary, the initiative and referendum and proportional representation have been incorporated in the constitution while the voters display marked independence in casting their ballots. It is also a land of comfort, the per capita wealth of the state being somewhat more than \$1,000 so that the political unrest cannot be ascribed to the pressure of want. Nor does ignorance prevail. On the contrary Oregon has an excellent common school system and the percentage of illiteracy is low. In the last few years the development of high schools has been rapid, partly under the benign stimulus of the state university. The university has reached the stage where it is well supported by the legislature. Popular prejudice against the higher studies is dying out as it always has sooner or later in other states. The Agricultural College at Corvallis has naturally won popular affection more rapidly and has a larger attendance. Its work comes near to the daily life of the people being concerned with horticulture, dairying and the mechanic arts. The normal school system of Oregon is still in an unsettled condition but its place in the

scheme of education is of course assured. The best endowed denominational college in the state is the Pacific University at Forest Grove, but there are several others whose usefulness is admittedly great. Whitman College at Walla Walla in Washington, not far from the site of the labors and tragic death of Marcus Whitman, bids fair to become an institution of the foremost rank. Oregon has no large cities except Portland, but there are many towns of moderate size whose inhabitants enjoy most of the advantages of urban life. Free public libraries have been founded in most of them, in some cases through the unselfish efforts of women's clubs. Naturally the Portland Public Library is the largest and best in the state. It has about 80,000 volumes which circulate among 400,000 borrowers annually.

**130. Industries.**—The products of Oregon are exceedingly diversified. Logging and lumbering form a very important industry as might be expected in a state where almost every section is well supplied with timber. Gold mining still flourishes, although the placers have usually been exhausted and the metal is now extracted from ores. Wheat raising is still the great agricultural resource of the Inland Empire, but in the Willamette Valley it has given way somewhat to fruit raising and dairying. Apples and prunes are produced everywhere in the Valley and of late years enterprising farmers have planted orchards of walnuts which give promise of abundant returns. Of course all the domestic animals are reared on the fertile farms of the Willamette. Angora goats have been intro-

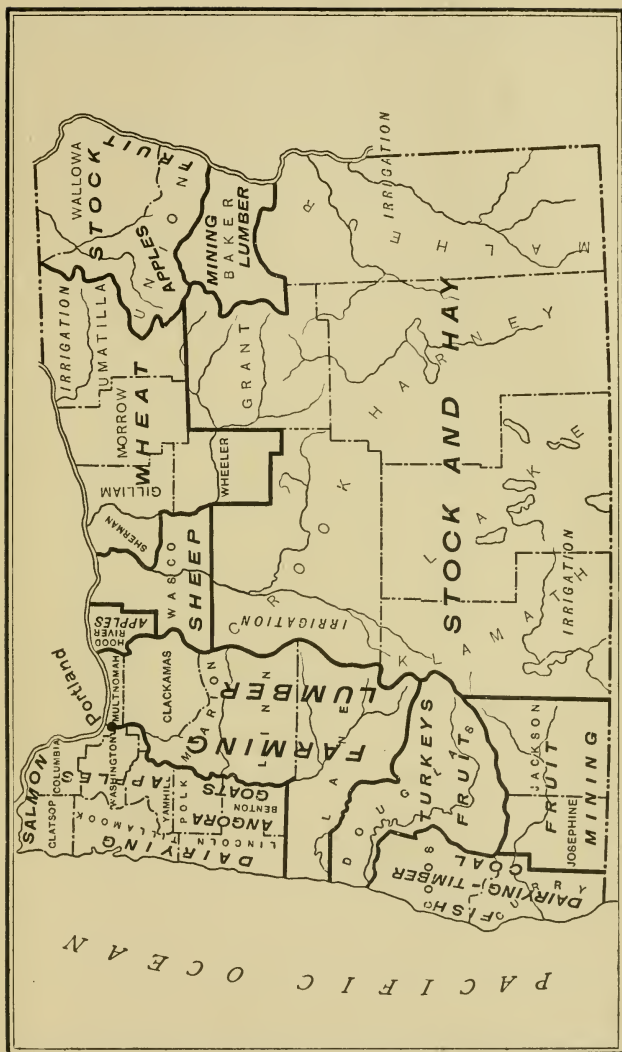
duced with promising results, and dairying has been greatly developed, but in this direction there is still ample room for progress. The Umpqua Valley closely resembles the Willamette in its products, but in the Valley of the Rogue River there is a decided tendency to make fruit the principal crop owing to unusual natural advantages. The apple, the pear, the grape and the peach are extraordinarily prolific in this region and the fruit is esteemed in the markets of the world for beauty and flavor as well as for keeping qualities. In the narrow strip of tillable land along the coast of Oregon dairying is everywhere pursued with great success. The coal mines in the region of Coos Bay steadily increase in importance. Several towns on the seashore have become flourishing summer resorts.<sup>152</sup> The salmon industry has declined from its former importance owing to unwise methods of fishing, but wholesome regulations have been enacted which may, with the coöperation of the fishermen, ultimately restore the phenomenal runs of the time of Lewis and Clark.

**131. Hood River.**—Nowhere in the world, perhaps, has scientific fruit growing been pursued with such unwearied diligence and brilliant success as at Hood River.

**132. Irrigation.**—The enviable conditions of rural life at Hood River result largely from the economic and educational influences of irrigation. The rainfall, which is sufficient to nourish luxuriant vegetation, is

<sup>152</sup>Empire City and Marshfield were founded in 1853. The first coal was shipped to San Francisco in 1855.





# INDUSTRIAL MAP OF OREGON



supplemented by leading water over the orchards in ditches. This requires small farms, intelligent agriculture and intimate coöperation among neighbors. It is therefore a great civilizing influence as well as an inestimable source of wealth. Irrigation in Oregon, as well as in other states which have areas of deficient rain, has been aided by the kindly intervention of the general government. Projects at Umatilla, Klamath and Malheur have been initiated by the federal engineers and everywhere in this eastern region of the state as soon as water is led over the fields the desert disappears and abundant crops spring up. Fruit, grain and in particular alfalfa, flourish on land where the early immigrants saw nothing but desolate sand and wearisome sage brush. In divers charming nooks among the mountains, like Eagle Valley, irrigation has been practiced for many years. The intelligent farmers of the Grande Ronde are applying it to increase the natural productiveness of their land, and the more progressive leaders of rural thought even in the Willamette Valley have begun to experiment with it.

**133. Portland.**—Portland, the largest city in Oregon, has become a true metropolis with an abundant supply of pure water from a mountain stream, an art museum, a great public library, excellent schools, beautiful homes, flourishing newspapers<sup>153</sup> and fine business

<sup>153</sup>The Oregonian, founded in the winter of 1850-1, ranks with the best newspapers in the United States. Harvey W. Scott has edited it since 1865. The first number appeared December 4, 1850. T. L. Dryer was the first editor. The Spectator, the first newspaper in Oregon, was established in 1846 at Oregon City, by the Oregon Printing Association and appeared twice a month.

houses. The World's Fair held here in 1905 to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of Lewis and Clark's journey across the continent, attended as it was by multitudes from all parts of the country, made the beauties and commercial advantages of Portland widely known. The heights around the city and the Willamette River which flows through it are incomparably beautiful, while the citizens have added a singular charm by cultivating roses which flourish here in great luxuriance. Enthusiasts have named Portland the "Rose City" not inappropriately, and a pleasing event of each year is the Rose Festival, celebrated in the lovely days of early June, which attracts throngs of visitors to witness the display of beautiful flowers.

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